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ANTHONY JOSHUA CHEATS DEATH IN NIGERIAN HORROR CRASH

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FURY AS STARMER REFUSES TO DEPORT EGYPTIAN 'EXTREMIST'

BY **MICHAEL KNOWLES**
Home Affairs Editor

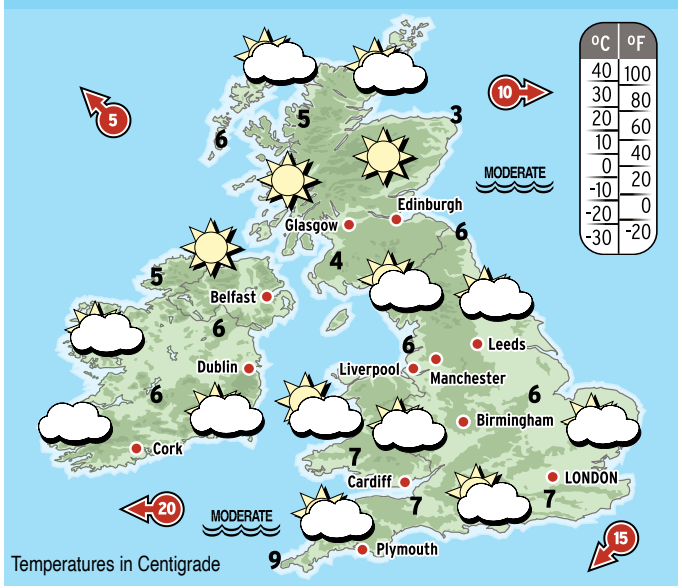
FURY has erupted over Keir Starmer's refusal to deport an activist accused of spouting antisemitic and racist abuse.

Dual-national Alaa Abd El-Fattah – whose return to the UK from Egypt was celebrated by the Prime Minister – branded Britons "dogs and monkeys", called for Zionists to be killed and boasted of hatred for white people.

He has apologised and suggested some of his online posts have

TURN TO PAGE 4

WEATHER FORECAST



Today's summary: Cloudy and cool; evening fair

North West: Cloudy with some clear spells later. Light winds, becoming chilly overnight. High 6C (43F).

Northern Ireland: Cloudy with sunny intervals. Clearer later. Light winds, turning chilly. High 6C (43F).

Wales: Cloudy with some bright spells later. Light winds easing, temperatures chilly at night. High 6C (43F).

Midlands: Cloudy, bright spells later. Light winds, turning chilly in the evening. High 6C (43F).

North East/Yorks: Cloudy with sunny spells later. Light winds. Turning chilly under clear evening skies. High 6C (43F).

Scotland: Mostly cloudy, becoming sunny by afternoon. Light westerly winds, cold throughout. High 3C (37F).

East Anglia: Cloudy start, bright spells later. Gentle breezes, cool throughout the day. High 7C (45F).

London/South East: Cloudy start, turning brighter later. Gentle winds. Chilly becoming milder by afternoon. High 7C (45F).

South: Cloudy, sunny spells later. Breezy, cooling by evening with clear skies. High 7C (45F).

South West: Mostly cloudy, brightening later. Light winds, cool, turning colder by evening. High 6C (43F).

Channel Isles: Cloudy with occasional sun. Overcast later, moderate winds, cool temperatures. High 6C (43F).

Sea: Smooth or slight.

UK OUTLOOK TOMORROW: Sunny spells, colder by night.

SIX-DAY FORECAST Temperatures in Centigrade

	WED min max	THU min max	FRI min max	SAT min max	SUN min max	MON min max
London	0 5	1 6	-1 6	-2 3	-2 3	-3 3
Belfast	2 4	2 6	-1 4	-2 2	-2 2	-2 2
Birmingham	1 5	1 6	-1 5	-3 2	-2 2	-3 2
Cardiff	0 5	2 7	0 7	-2 4	0 4	-1 3
Glasgow	4 7	1 6	-2 4	-3 3	-2 2	-1 2
Manchester	3 5	2 7	-2 4	-2 2	-2 2	-2 1
Newcastle	4 5	0 6	-1 3	-2 1	-3 1	-2 1
Norwich	1 5	0 6	-1 4	-1 4	-2 3	-2 3
Plymouth	2 6	4 7	2 7	0 5	2 5	2 5

Britain yesterday

24 hours to 5pm	SUN (hrs)	RAIN (ins)	TEMP (min)	TEMP (max)
Aberdeen	0.2	0.02	2	6
Aberporth	0.0	0.00	4	4
Alnwick	0.1	0.05	4	6
Belfast	0.0	0.00	4	5
Birmingham	0.3	0.00	4	6
B'mouth	0.0	0.00	1	6
Bristol	1.0	0.00	4	6
Cardiff	0.0	0.00	4	5
Durham	0.1	0.01	3	6
Edinburgh	0.0	0.00	2	4
Glasgow	0.4	0.00	0	3
Hull	0.0	0.00	6	7
Ipswich	0.0	0.00	1	6
Leeds	0.1	0.00	5	6
Lincoln	0.0	0.00	5	6
London	0.0	0.00	5	6
Manchester	0.0	0.00	4	6
Oxford	0.0	0.00	4	5
S'hampton	2.5	0.00	3	6
St Andrews	0.9	0.00	1	4

Moon, sun and tides

MOON rises: 12.15pm, sets: 3.26am
SUN rises London: 8.06am, sets: 4.00pm
Manchester rises: 8.25am, sets: 3.58pm

Full Moon 03 January

HIGH TIDE

London B'ge	(8.56am), (9.49pm)
Liverpool	(6.37am), (7.05pm)
Greenock	(7.40am), (8.21pm)
Dover	(6.30am), (7.16pm)

Britain Extremes: (24 hours to 11pm Sunday)
Warmest: Bridlington 8C (46F)
Coldest: Tulloch Bridge -9C (16F)
Wettest: Altnaharra 0.08in.
Sunniest: Jersey 4.0hr.

Lighting-up times

Belfast	4.06pm-8.46am
Birmingham	4.02pm-8.18am
Bristol	4.10pm-8.15am
Glasgow	3.51pm-8.47am
London	4.00pm-8.06am
Manchester	3.58pm-8.25am
Newcastle	3.46pm-8.31am

Europe forecast

Today			Tomorrow		
Amsterdam	Fair	7C/45F	Amsterdam	Cloudy	7C/45F
Brussels	Fair	6C/43F	Brussels	Fair	6C/43F
Dublin	Cloudy	8C/46F	Dublin	Fair	5C/41F
Frankfurt	Sunny	4C/39F	Frankfurt	Cloudy	3C/37F
Geneva	Sunny	2C/36F	Geneva	Sunny	1C/34F
Lisbon	Fog	13C/55F	Lisbon	Fog	13C/55F
Madrid	Sunny	11C/52F	Madrid	Fog	9C/48F
Paris	Sunny	5C/41F	Paris	Sunny	4C/39F
Rome	Sunny	15C/59F	Rome	Fair	10C/50F

Around the world yesterday

		C	F			C	F			C	F
Amsterdam	Cloudy	6	43	Hong Kong	Sunny	21	70	New York	Cloudy	-1	30
Athens	Sunny	13	55	Istanbul	Sunny	6	43	Nice	Sunny	12	54
Barcelona	Shwrs	13	55	Jersey	Sunny	5	41	Nicosia	Sunny	14	57
Berlin	Cloudy	4	39	Larnaca	Sunny	16	61	Perth	Sunny	28	82
Budapest	Sunny	4	39	Las Palmas	Sunny	20	68	Prague	Fair	1	34
Cairo	Fair	19	66	Los Angeles	Sunny	18	64	Singapore	Thndr	29	84
Cape Town	Sunny	31	88	Luxor	Sunny	22	72	Stockholm	Sunny	-1	30
Casablanca	Shwrs	16	61	Malaga	Sunny	14	57	Sydney	Sunny	22	72
Corfu	Sunny	16	61	Mallorca	Cloudy	15	59	Tel Aviv	Thndr	16	61
Dublin	Cloudy	6	43	Malta	Fair	16	61	Tenerife	Fair	22	72
Dubrovnik	Sunny	13	55	Melbourne	Sunny	29	84	Toronto	Drizzle	-1	30
Faro	Sunny	14	57	Miami	Sunny	26	79	Tunis	Fair	15	59
Florence	Sunny	7	45	Moscow	Snow	-4	25	Venice	Mist	1	34
Gibraltar	Sunny	14	57	Nairobi	Fair	24	75	Vienna	Sunny	0	32
Guernsey	Sunny	7	45	New Delhi	Sunny	14	57	Warsaw	Cloudy	1	34

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A plan to put asylum seekers at an Army base sparked protests in Crowborough, East Sussex

Put tags on male asylum seekers, says crime tsar

BY **AARON NEWBURY**

A POLICE and Crime Commissioner has called for migrants to wear electronic tags to keep tabs on them.

Katy Bourne said: "My proposal is we explore requiring asylum seekers – starting with male migrants – to wear an electronic tag of some form."

The Conservative, who has overseen law and order in Sussex for 13 years, added: "If migrants refused to wear a tag it would be an indication they are intending to abscond or are involved in unlawful activity."

The intervention comes as the Home Office is expected to controversially move up to 600 migrants to an Army camp at Crowborough, East Sussex, in the new year. Ms Bourne, *left*, said there was high anxiety among residents over the influx. Tagging would give asylum seekers "greater freedom to travel further from migrant holding centres and could be the first step in making it more feasible to get temporary jobs", she added.

The Home Office said: "We are furious at the level of illegal migrants and asylum hotels in this country.

"This government will close every asylum hotel, and we are working to move asylum seekers into more suitable accommodation such as military bases."

Majority of hospitals are using tech a decade old

BY **KATIE HARRIS**
Senior Political Correspondent

EIGHT in 10 hospitals in England are using outdated machines, research suggests.

The findings have sparked warnings that patients are being "put at risk by ancient and unreliable equipment".

Some 393 X-ray machines, MRI scanners and radiotherapy machines are more than a decade old, according to data obtained from 48 hospital trusts by the Liberal Democrats.

Error

This is despite advice from NHS England that CT and MRI scanners and X-ray machines should be replaced every 10 years to ensure they operate reliably and produce clear images.

Lib Dem health spokesperson Helen Morgan said: "The potential for error from poor machines doesn't bear thinking about."

The government said: "We have delivered state-of-the-art DEXA scanners providing 29,000 additional bone scans per year and £70million to replace radiotherapy machines speeding up treatment for cancer patients."

CORRECTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

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Flights camera action

A husband embraces his sailor wife in Portsmouth after her return from an eight-month deployment on HMS Prince of Wales

An RAF Atlas C.1 aircraft flies over Buckingham Palace to celebrate the King's birthday

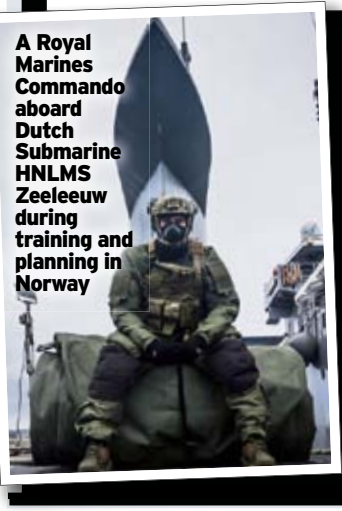
BY **CHRIS HUGHES**

OUR Armed Forces show their power and glory – and their human touch.

These MoD photographs were among 60 chosen as the Best of Defence Imagery 2025. Chief of the Defence Staff Sir Richard Knighton said the images show "how we keep the UK secure at home and strong abroad".

A Wildcat HMA2 helicopter from the Commando Helicopter Force in Norway during Operation Clockwork

A female officer cadet from the Northumbrian University Officer Training Corps takes part in bayonet drills during a four-day exercise in Sennelager, Germany



A Royal Marines Commando aboard Dutch Submarine HNLMS Zeeleeuw during training and planning in Norway

An aircraft handler on board HMS Prince of Wales braces himself as an F-35B aircraft prepares to take off from the flight deck

The view during a flight on board a Tutor T1 aircraft to take aerial shots and video of the surrounding area of the RAF Leeming base in North Yorkshire

CALLS TO DEPORT EGYPTIAN

Philp: 'It is shameful that to strip British citizenship

FROM PAGE ONE

been "twisted out of their meaning". But Reform UK leader Nigel Farage last night accused the government of opening the country's borders to "evil people" as he demanded urgent law changes.

Home Office officials believe that Mr Abd El-Fattah, who returned to Britain on Boxing Day after being released from jail, would fall short of the threshold to have his UK citizenship revoked.

Even more incredibly, sources told the Daily Express Sir Keir's welcome for the Egyptian dissident could mean he is never deported.

Former immigration minister Kevin Foster said: "The most likely [way to revoke citizenship] here is to argue it's not conducive to the public good. It's hard to see how the government could argue this having welcomed his arrival."

Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philp called Mr Abd El-Fattah an "extremist", adding: "It is shameful that Keir Starmer is too weak to strip British citizenship from this despicable man and deport him. He has spouted hateful anti-white racism, antisemitic bile and called for acts of violence against Britain. People like this have no place here.

"Labour is pointing to a historic judgment based on the ECHR.

"They should challenge this again in the courts, but the solution ultimately is to leave the ECHR."

Reform UK has demanded Labour changes the law to ensure all foreign nationals granted British citizenship are of "good character".

The party also said it will change the law to allow the Home Secretary to deport anyone who expresses "vile and anti-British views". Mr Farage said: "Both Tory and Labour governments have opened our doors to evil people.

"Reform will change the law and make our country safe again. Will Starmer do the same?"

Conservative MP and former Home Office adviser Nick Timothy said of Mr Abd El-Fattah: "He's not sorry for tweets. He's sorry he's been exposed. And he's not a 'dissident'. He's a promoter of terrorism and murder."

Fresh allegations emerged last night that Mr Abd El-Fattah asked "[Where is] Khaybar Khaybar ya yahud?" – an Arabic anti-Israel slogan used at pro-Palestinian demonstrations – while commenting on a debate on the Middle East.

The slogan references the Battle of Khaybar of 628 CE, which began after Muhammad and a large Muslim army besieged Khaybar, in present-day Saudi Arabia, that was home to a Jewish community.

The Campaign Against Antisemitism said the failure of the authorities to do due diligence on the dissident "represents another total failure of the system". It added: "In the wake of terrorist attacks on Jews from Manchester to Bondi, the UK has yet one more resident who, at least at one time, wanted to see 'Zionists' murdered.

Desperate

"Thanks to the ineptitude of two successive governments, we are left to pin our hopes on the prospect that the passage of time and a spell in Egyptian prison have led to a radical rethink by Mr Abd El-Fattah, beyond his desperate apology."

Counter-terrorism officers are reviewing Mr Abd El-Fattah's posts, the Express can confirm.

Senior Labour MPs said Sir Keir has lost the trust of British Jews and joined those calling on the PM to strip Mr Abd El-Fattah of his British citizenship.

One said: "It's truly shocking we've welcomed a racist antisemite with open arms. Serious questions need to be asked about the lack of judgment and the Home Office should be contemplating stripping him of his British citizenship."

Another added: "Letting in [a man] with a history of rampant antisemitism and anti-Zionism crossing the line into terror supporting and calling for the death of all Zionists is ridiculous and bad enough."

Mr Abd El-Fattah's citizenship was granted in December 2021 under Boris Johnson, reportedly through his UK-born mother.

No10 defended helping him return to the UK, insisting the government would "welcome" the return of any citizen "unfairly detained abroad".

The PM's spokesman added: "That is central to Britain's commitment to religious and political freedom. That said, it doesn't change that we have condemned the nature of these historic tweets and consider them abhorrent."

Activist Alaa Abd El-Fattah with family and friends after his release from an Egyptian prison in September. Left, Chris Philp

EXPRESS VOTE

Should Alaa Abd El-Fattah now be stripped of his British citizenship?

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Keir Starmer is too weak from this despicable man'

AMID outrage over extremist social media posts by Egyptian activist Alaa Abd El-Fattah, whose arrival in Britain has inexplicably been greeted ecstatically by Keir Starmer and other out-of-touch politicians, two topics have largely been ignored.

Much of the anger over the past few days has focused on racism, antisemitism and incitements to hatred and murder in his vile comments. And rightly so.

Any cursory glance at Abd El-Fattah's social media would suggest he is not the sort of person we should be flinging out the welcome mat for, no matter how delighted the PM is to do so.

What has received less scrutiny is his open and ugly misogyny and homophobia. Among comments attributed to Abd El-Fattah are posts joking about coming to Britain to "rape your women", alongside remarks referring to gay people as "dirty homosexuals".

'His idealogy threatens the safety of women'

Others are simply too disgusting to bear repeating in print.

As a young woman, I am sick of being told to excuse this behaviour because the man responsible is politically convenient. He should not be allowed in this country or remain a British citizen. His ideology threatens the safety and dignity of women like me.

Either we protect women and LGBT+ people in all circumstances, or our much-trumpeted values mean nothing at all.

The government constantly tells us it is committed to women's rights. Ministers boast about tackling violence against women and girls, waving pride flags and slogans. But when faced with someone who openly expresses misogyny and hostility towards gay people, those principles suddenly become negotiable.

British citizenship is not a participation trophy. It is a privilege that should come with basic standards, including respect for women, gay people and people of different races or religions. These are the standards we expect of every other Briton, so why should this man be an exception?

If Britain is to be a genuinely progressive nation, not just one that talks a good game, then people who promote misogyny and homophobia have no place here.

If ministers truly believe women deserve to be safe, as they so often claim, they should act decisively.

Abd El-Fattah's citizenship should be revoked and he should be deported. He should be banned from this country so he cannot spread a dangerous ideology that normalises violence and hatred.

Deportation is not cruel. It is the responsible thing to do. It is the state doing its job.

I find it impossible to believe these views were entirely unknown before he was granted citizenship by the previous Tory government.

It is an utter disgrace he was allowed a British passport. The very least the current government can now do is to correct the mistake and revoke it.

This should be the litmus test. Either ministers are brave enough to defend women, even when it is politically uncomfortable, or they do not truly value the safety, freedom and dignity of women like me at all.

COMMENT

SOPHIE CORCORAN
Political commentator

Officials insist Sir Keir was "not aware" of the tweets until after Mr Abd El-Fattah entered the UK.

Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper last night ordered an urgent review into "serious information failures".

She said she, the PM and former foreign secretary David Lammy were not briefed on the posts.

And in a letter to Dame Emily Thornberry, chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Ms Cooper said: "Based on work I instigated in the FCDO over the weekend, it is apparent not only that current and former prime ministers were never briefed on these tweets when they spoke publicly about this case in the past, but also civil servants in charge of this case were unaware."

She added: "It is clear this has been an unacceptable failure and that long-standing procedures and due diligence arrangements have been completely inadequate for this situation, leading to the serious problem of successive foreign secretaries and prime ministers making public statements without all relevant information."

Mr Abd El-Fattah claimed yesterday that some of his social media posts had been "twisted". He said: "Looking at the tweets now – the ones that were not completely twisted out of their meaning – I do understand how shocking and hurtful they are and for that I unequivocally apologise.

Regret

"They were mostly expressions of a young man's anger and frustrations in a time of regional crises and the rise of police brutality against Egyptian youth. I particularly regret some written as part of online insult battles with the total disregard for how they read to other people. I should have known better. I must also stress some tweets have been misunderstood, seemingly in bad faith."

Mr Abd El-Fattah did not have to pass a "good character" test to gain citizenship after a Supreme Court ruling in 2016 allowed a Jamaican criminal to stay because he had a British father.

The activist was detained in Egypt in September 2019 and two years later, in December 2021, was sentenced to five years in prison on charges of spreading false news. It was branded a breach of international law by the UN and he was released after being pardoned by the Egyptian president Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi.

But Counter Terrorism Policing said last night: "The posts are now being assessed by specialist officers in the Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit. Should any potential offences be identified, depending on the nature of the offences, the CTIRU will either refer the matter to the relevant investigation team within Counter Terrorism Policing or to the relevant local force to consider for further investigation."

OPINION: PAGE 12

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Sir Idris...

BY **GILES SHELDRICK**
Chief Reporter

IDRIS Elba, Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean lead the New Year Honours list – which also celebrates our great athletes, entertainers and inspiring characters.

Anti-knife campaigner Idris, 53, is knighted for services to young people after founding a charity with wife Sabrina, 36, to help youngsters. Sir Idris said: "I receive this honour on behalf of the many young people whose talent, ambition and resilience has driven the work of the Elba Hope Foundation.

"I hope we can do more to draw attention to the importance of sustained, practical support for young people and to the responsibility we all share to help them find an alternative to violence."

Olympian Jayne becomes a Dame and pro partner Christopher a knight for services to ice skating and voluntary service, 41 years after mesmerising the world with their interpretation of Ravel's Bolero at the 1984 Winter Games in Sarajevo.

The pair collected MBEs in 1981 and OBEs in 2000 but fans of the Dancing on Ice judges have long campaigned for an upgrade.

Dame Jayne, 68, and Sir Christopher, 67, called the new honours "wonderful and humbling at the same time".

She said the timing was "perfect" after they performed for the last time this year.

Dame Jayne added: "Receiving this award at the end of the year, it's just finished everything."

Six of the Lionesses are honoured after their stunning Euros victory in the summer – with captain Leah Williamson, 28, made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE).

Alex Greenwood, 32, Keira Walsh, 28, Georgia Stanway, and Ella Toone, both 26, were on the side that beat Spain in the July final in Basel, Switzerland, and become MBEs.

And the team's Dutch manager Sarina Wiegman, 56, who has won the Euros twice with England and once with the Netherlands, is given an honorary damehood. England's Women's Rugby World Cup winning squad are also strongly represented.

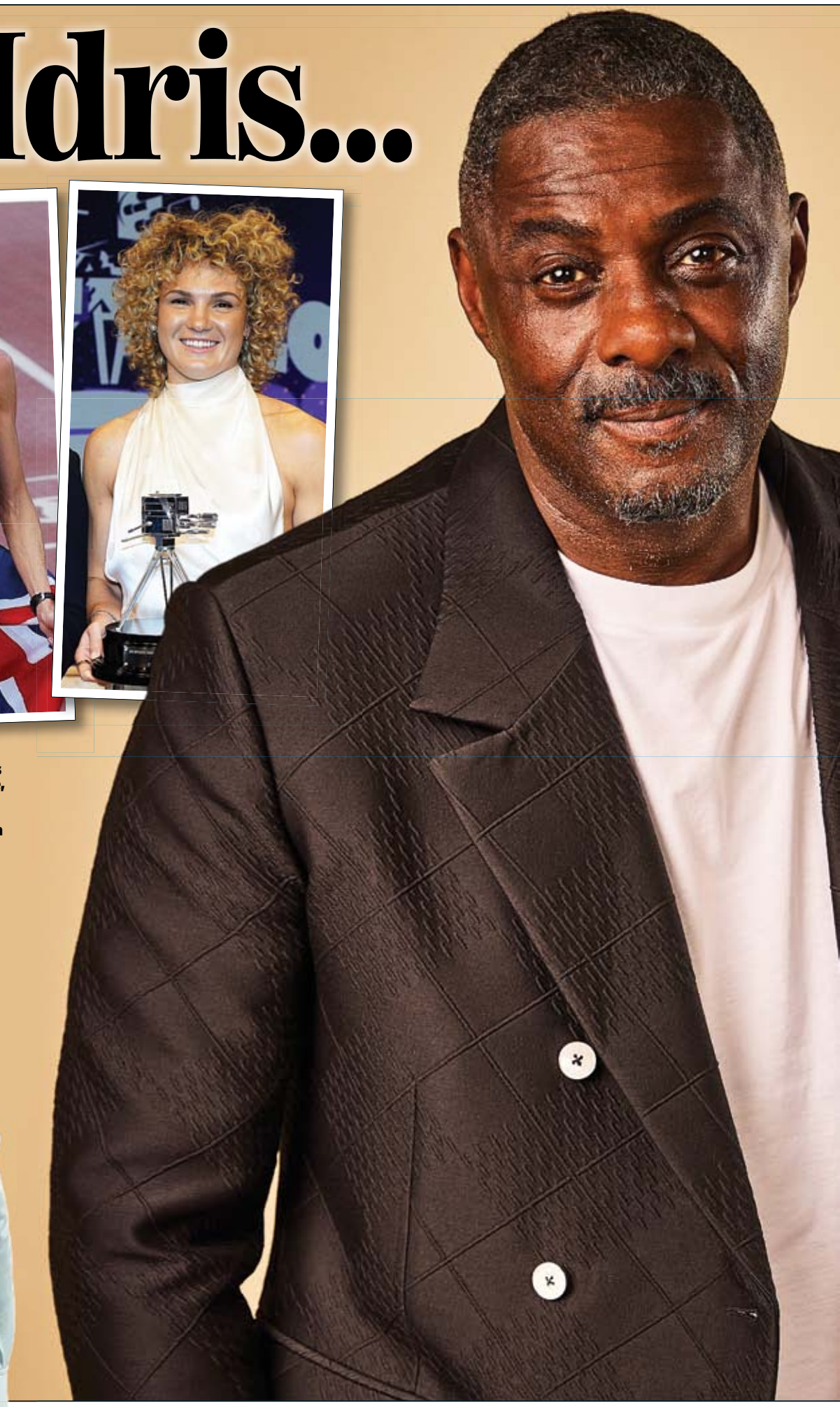
Marlie Packer, 36, and Zoe Aldcroft, 29, become OBEs, along with coach John Mitchell, 61.

He said: "I am incredibly honoured to receive this recognition, but I want to be clear that it reflects the work of the Red Roses World Cup-winning squad and the outstanding staff around them."

Zoe said: "The recognition isn't mine alone. This year I have felt nothing but love and support from so many people and I am extremely grateful.

"My family's belief in me has been unrivalled, and I am also fortunate to have been surrounded by an unbelievable group of players and staff who have given everything to the Red Roses."

Great sports Paula, above, Ellie, above right, and Dame Sarina



Teammate Ellie Kildunne, 26 – who was runner-up in the BBC Sports Personality of the Year – is made an MBE, along with Sadia Kabeya, 23, and Megan Jones, 29, after the Red Roses defeated Canada in the final in September.

Meanwhile, three-time London Marathon winner Paula Radcliffe, 52, who held the women's marathon world record for 16 years, is made an OBE. Spanning the worlds of sport and entertainment, football commentator Clive Tyldesley, 71, becomes an OBE for services to sport broadcasting and charity.

He led the ITV team at five World Cups and five Euros and was lead commentator at 17 UEFA Champions League and nine FA Cup finals. Match of the Day host Gabby Logan, 52, is now an OBE.

The Kumars At No42 actress Meera Syal, 64, becomes a Dame, TV presenter and author Richard Osman, 55, and comic Matt Lucas, 51, will collect OBEs.

So too will actor Warwick Davis, 55, while Paul Elliott, 78 – one half of the Chuckle Brothers – becomes an MBE.

Summer

Richard said he was "absolutely thrilled" with the honour, while Warwick joked: "This is the best thing that's ever happened to me – and I've been in Star Wars."

Comedy writer Roy Clarke, 95 – who created sitcoms Last Of The

the skate and good

Sir Idris, far left, accepted honour on behalf of the young. Roy, above left, Gabby, above, and Cynthia, left

Dame Jayne and Sir Christopher on their final tour. From top right, Richard, Matt and Paul

Summer Wine, Open All Hours and Keeping Up Appearances – becomes a knight. And Wicked star Cynthia Erivo, 38, is made an MBE for services to music and drama.

Elsewhere, Amanda Pritchard, who stood down as chief executive of NHS England in March, becomes a dame for services to the health service. Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer said: "This year's honours list celebrates the very best of Britain – people who put the common good ahead of themselves to strengthen communities and change lives. Their quiet dedication speaks to the decent, compassionate country we are proud to be. On behalf of the whole nation, thank you – and congratulations to everyone recognised."

Anyone can nominate someone for an honour, which are usually given to recognise significant achievement or service.

Two lists are published a year, the other is usually issued to coincide with the King's official birthday in June. Exiting PMs can also draw up a resignation honours list. Deserving recipients have to first get the nod by senior civil servants. Once approved, the final list goes to the Prime Minister and then the King, who formally awards the honours. The New Year list includes 1,157 recipients at CBE level, which ranks above OBE and MBE. Women were said to have their strongest representation since 2020. Across the list, 10% of winners come from ethnic minority backgrounds, including 5% Asian, 3% black and 2% mixed. Fifteen percent have a disability or long-term health condition and 36% are from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

‘We’ve got the wrong attitude. It’s disappointing what’s turned out’

Jewish D-Day veteran appalled by rise in antisemitism

BY **GILES SHELDRICK**
Chief Reporter

Mervyn Kersh with his medals and, left, with fellow veterans at the Cenotaph

SECOND World War hero Mervyn Kersh, who has been given a New Year honour, has voiced his fears over soaring antisemitism and says leaders have not learned the lessons from appeasement.

And the Jewish D-Day campaign soldier, who landed in Nazi-held France in 1944 and helped liberate Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, says Britain must be strong against the threat from Vladimir Putin.

In a warning to our leaders, the 101-year-old said he can see chilling similarities between today and when war erupted in 1939.

Mervyn, awarded a British Empire Medal, said: “What is disappointing is the antisemitism that I see everywhere, hear everywhere, or read.

“There’d be no need for a war now, we’ve got the wrong attitude. It’s disappointing what’s turned out now.”

Mervyn, from Cockfosters, North London, landed as part of the Allied fight to capture occupied France, serving with the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

His role in the invasion was to help ensure a steady flow of vehicles to supply British Army units battling into Germany.

But it was at the Bergen-Belsen concentration amp that he witnessed the horrors of war and which gives him a sense of foreboding given the hate swirling today.

British troops liberated it on April 15, 1945, finding tens of thousands of starving prisoners and thousands of unburied bodies.

It is estimated 70,000 Jews died there.

He said: “I could almost say [going to war] was a crusade, if that’s not the wrong word. To me, this had a purpose.

“It wasn’t just a game or passing the time. It was to put the Germans out of action as long as possible. We knew what was happening. We didn’t know the extent of it, but we knew they had gas chambers.

“They were killing people, shooting them, hanging them.”

Mervyn, already a recipient of the Legion d’honneur – the highest and French national order of merit, – was awarded the BEM for his tireless crusade to educate children about the Holocaust.

Around 384,000 British military personnel died during the Second World War.

Each year Mervyn and his peers visit the British Normandy Memorial, overlooking Gold Beach where he landed and which records the names of 22,442 soldiers who fell on June 6, 1944 and the three-month Battle of Normandy that followed.

However, his war was nearly over before it started after his religion almost led to his arrest and imprisonment.

Before he was due to sail to Normandy, Private Kersh was ordered to see his commanding officer. He demanded an explanation as to why the 19-year-old soldier was refusing to eat rations of tinned beef and vegetables and only surviving on canned peaches.

His superiors suspected he was trying to dodge the war by making himself too frail to fight for the liberation of Europe.

He recalled: “I said that was the last thing I wanted to do. I’m Jewish. I didn’t eat anything that wasn’t kosher as far as I could help it.” The charges were dropped.

He said: “It took us 14 hours to cross the Channel and one of the sailors told me that we were adrift to the west a little.

“Nevertheless we reached the Normandy beach intended, which was codenamed Gold Beach. Our sector was codenamed Jig and was the western end of the British line next to the Americans at Omaha Beach.

“They had suffered enormous casualties being unable to get beyond the beach for safer ground. But the British had cleared their cliffs and when I landed we merely had to ride up the ramp road to the

Proud Betty Brown, 92, who has been made an OBE

‘It’s on behalf of all the subpostmasters and what they have gone through’

BY **GILES SHELDRICK**

THE oldest surviving victim of the Post Office Horizon IT scandal has accepted her honour on behalf of the subpostmasters whose lives were ruined by the miscarriage of justice.

Betty Brown, 92, ran a Post Office with her late husband Oswall from 1985 to 2003 and estimates they lost around £100,000 of their own money to cover nonexistent shortfalls from a faulty accounting system.

She has been made an OBE, becoming the latest victim to be honoured after campaigning for wronged subpostmasters.

Betty was one of the original victims who took part in the group legal action led by Sir Alan Bates against the Post Office.

She said this Christmas was the first in 26 years that she could relax with “no worries” after receiving her settlement from one of the government’s compensation schemes.

Betty, of Consett, Co Durham, said: “I’m honoured. I’m just not able to handle it. I’m just an ordinary, hard-working person. It’s not something you ever think about. I think of all the subpostmasters, all the 900, the 13 that committed suicide. It’s on behalf of them and what they have gone through and what I’ve gone through. I feel everything they feel. I will wear it in honour of them.”

The Horizon IT system was responsible for more than 900 subpostmasters being wrongfully prosecuted as it provided incorrect accounting information. Thousands, like Betty, were forced to make up for financial losses.

The scandal has been described as one of the worst miscarriages of justice in the UK.

After receiving her citation letter, Betty said: “Nothing prepares you for it, never in your wildest dreams. You just fight for what you’re entitled to, for justice.”

A total of 59 victims of the Horizon scandal contemplated suicide, the public inquiry into the scandal found. Chairman Sir Wyn Williams said there was a “real possibility” 13 people took their own lives.

The government said: “We must never lose sight of the Horizon scandal’s human impact on postmasters and their families, which the Horizon inquiry has highlighted so well.”

top. I was very fortunate that we landed while the Germans were reeling and before they regrouped.

“At the top of the cliff ramp, in Port-en-Bessin, the villagers cheered us and offered us glasses of wine and flowers as we slowly moved ahead.”

He rose through the ranks to finish his Army career as Acting Warrant Officer, serving in Egypt before being demobbed in 1946.

At the Remembrance Day service at the Cenotaph last month Mervyn was joined by fellow D-Day lionhearts Jim Grant, 100, and Henry Rice, 99, to head the parade of veterans.

Mervyn, an ambassador for the Normandy Memorial Trust, said he sees comparisons between now and the period just before the Second World War, adding that Russia is “threatening the West.”

In a survey of the Jewish community by the charity Campaign Against Antisemitism, almost half say they do not feel welcome here. A clear majority have considered leaving the UK because of a surge in antisemitism since the October 7 attacks of 2023, general prejudice against Jews in society, and anti-semitism across political parties.

Issuing a defiant message to politicians, Mervyn said: “The top budget should be defence, there’s nothing there for anything else. That’s all there is. Defence must come first, second, third, fourth and fifth, because only if you’re strong, you won’t be attacked.”

And he compared today’s Western leaders to weak Neville Chamberlain, whose 1930s appeasement of Hitler failed, saying: “They think they’ve just got to hope and make speeches.

“We’ve got to either have another leader who’s more aggressive, I don’t mean start a war, but aggressive. We’ve got to defend, that’s the first concern.”

Dick Goodwin, Vice President of the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans, said: “We are absolutely delighted to congratulate Mervyn on his well-deserved inclusion in the New Year Honours List.

“Being awarded a British Empire Medal for services to Holocaust education is a fitting recognition of his tireless commitment to ensuring that the lessons of history are never forgotten.

“Mervyn is a much-loved regular on Taxi Charity trips, and it has been a privilege for our volunteers to spend time with him and hear his powerful story first hand.

“We are incredibly proud to see his dedication and impact recognised in this way, and we send him our warmest congratulations.”

OPINION: PAGE 12

Labour won't say sorry for family farm tax anguish

BY **STEPH SPYRO**
Deputy Political Editor

DOWNING Street has refused to apologise to farmers despite last week's climbdown on inheritance tax.

Labour's watered-down plans will see the relief threshold for farmers raised from £1million to £2.5m.

This comes after months of protests and warnings over farmers contemplating suicide to avoid the taxes as they pass their businesses from generation to generation.

But the Prime Minister's spokesman yesterday declined to say "sorry" to food growers.

When asked whether Sir Keir Starmer would apologise, the spokesman said: "On the point about farmers taking their own lives, this is clearly a highly sensitive issue. Our thoughts are with any family affected and it would be inappropriate to discuss individual cases. The government takes mental health support for farmers extremely seriously. These changes strike the right balance between supporting rural communities and maintaining fiscal responsibility."

Jonathan Charlesworth, who found his father John dead in a barn on their farm in Barnsley, welcomed the U-turn last week.

But he said it "won't bring back the lives lost over the last year or so due to the anxiety caused, but will hopefully prevent a flood of suicides running up to the commencement in April". The higher inheritance tax threshold will allow spouses or civil partners to pass on up to £5m in qualifying agricultural or business assets between them before paying inheritance tax – on top of existing allowances. Above that allowance, farmers will get 50% relief on qualifying assets and will pay a reduced effective rate of up to 20%, rather than the standard 40%.

Emma Mosey, chair of the Farm Retail Association, said: "The revisions provide a much-needed lifeline for the family farms that underpin our industry.

"However, it is a great shame it has taken 14 months for the government to listen."

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Shameful scene in Bordesley Green

Rubbish Christmas after nearly a year of bin strike

RESIDENTS face rotting Christmas leftovers on their streets after the Birmingham bin strike escalated.

Sacks of rubbish have been dumped around the Small Heath and Bordesley Green areas since the big day and families have no idea when it will be cleared.

The strikes over pay and jobs began in January and agency workers employed by Job & Talent on the refuse contract joined the picket lines earlier this month.

Dad-of-one Paul Dalgliesh, 44, of Small Heath, said: "I was dreading the festive period and a day after Christmas the rubbish got worse. It just makes you feel ashamed, embarrassed to live in this city. To see rats running around the place makes you depressed.

"It has been hard to get into the festive spirit when you see the streets a complete mess."

Unite said members planned a third "megapicket" next month and warned action could continue beyond May's local elections.

Birmingham council said it still wanted to reach a settlement, adding: "We are pushing on with delivering the waste service that the people of Birmingham expect and deserve."

BY **ED CHATTERTON**

Head judge Shirley Ballas

Strictly's Shirley: It's sad double act gone

BY **DANIEL BIRD**

SHIRLEY Ballas says it will be sad when Strictly returns without Claudia Winkleman and Tess Daly.

The presenting duo announced in October that they would be handing the banton to new presenters.

Head judge Shirley, 65, admits she was surprised when she heard that they were both going.

Claudia and Tess, 56, fronted the series together since 2014, and their last appearance as a duo was the pre-recorded festive episode, which aired on Christmas Day.

"Everyone was surprised," Shirley told Saga Magazine. "I share the changing room next to them, and they are full of giggles and laughter.

Intrusion

"They also showed me the way from when I joined until now, so it will be sad."

Shirley made her debut as head judge in September 2017. But while she has appeared for nine seasons, she almost quit the year after she joined.

"I didn't know if I wanted the job back because of the intrusion, people selling stories, the constant criticism," she admitted.

Son Mark, also a dancer, encouraged her to stay.

Several celebs are being linked to the vacant presenting job including Zoe Ball, who previously hosted It Takes Two, and former professional dancer Janette Manrara.

Chief content officer for the BBC Kate Phillips revealed she has been sifting through dozens of names. "We have had so many people who are keen," she said.

Claudia Winkleman will be welcoming stars to the sofa on her own talk show

'I'm over the moon they are letting me try this...'

Claudia finally gets her own chat show

BY **NICOLA METHVEN**

CLAUDIA Winkleman's chat show for BBC1 has finally been confirmed – three years after she filmed a pilot but was "too busy" to take it any further.

Announcing the exciting news, she said: "I can't quite believe it and I'm incredibly grateful to the BBC for this amazing opportunity. I'm obviously going to be awful, that goes without saying, but I'm over the moon they're letting me try."

As was first revealed back in January 2024, Beeb bosses were keen for Claudia, 53 – host of TV juggernaut The Traitors – to follow in the footsteps of Graham Norton.

Since then she has ditched her Radio 2 weekend show and stepped down as presenter of Strictly Come Dancing, which had filled her weekends from September to December for the past 11 years.

Now she will share the Friday night slot with Norton, who signed a new three-year deal with the BBC in the autumn. We previously told how Claudia had been toying with the idea of becoming a chat show host, but the idea had been "put on ice" because her schedule was too full.

After filming the pilot at the end of 2022, one source confirmed it had gone extremely well, but added: "Nothing is going to happen anytime soon. Claudia is just so busy, the timing is all wrong." But three years on the situation has changed. The programme will be made by the same company behind 62-year-old Graham's show, So Television.

Claudia on sofa as a guest on The Graham Norton Show in January 2025

Managing director Graham Stuart said: "Graham Norton has made the Friday night talk show slot a dazzling appointment to view. How can you possibly follow that? By booking a host equally as brilliant. So we have."

Graham, whose BBC series launched back in 2007, has a new deal taking him up to 2028.

His loyal audience of three million viewers makes The Graham Norton Show "the biggest chat show in the market", according to the BBC.

Speaking in October, he said: "Getting to host my own chat show is a huge pleasure as well as a privilege. I'm thrilled that the BBC are allowing me to continue for another three years."

His 34th series will air on BBC1 later in 2026. In February, mum-of-three Claudia stood in for Norton while he was working Down Under on his live theatre tour.

Her own show will now launch with a seven-week run in the spring and will see her welcoming "the biggest names from the worlds of film, television, music and beyond to her sofa, for lively conversation with the help of a studio audience".

BBC entertainment commissioning boss Kalpna Patel-Knight said the move recognised how Claudia had become a "true national treasure".

Exciting

Calling her "warm, witty and endlessly entertaining", Kalpna added: "She has an extraordinary ability to put people at ease and bring out the very best in them, whether they're global superstars or members of the audience.

"It's very exciting that she will be fronting her very own show on the BBC, and we can't wait for viewers to join Claudia and her sofa full of stars."

As well as The Claudia Winkleman Show, she will continue to front The Traitors, The Celebrity Traitors and The Piano, which is returning for a fourth run on Channel 4 next year.

DAILY EXPRESS

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Labour's weakness only emboldens extremists

HOW utterly depressing, yet no less predictable, that Sir Keir Starmer trumpeted the arrival in the UK of a man who loathes everything this country stands for.

Alaa Abd El-Fattah is said to have called for Zionists and police to be killed while labelling British people "dogs and monkeys".

The existence of the historical, but abhorrent, messages were known but our PM claims to have been unaware and said he was "delighted" at his arrival in the UK.

This government's welcome is not an oversight, it is part of a frighteningly familiar picture. Let us not forget Labour's decision to officially recognise Palestine – a choice that put politics over peace and which has simply emboldened antisemites.

Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch and Reform UK leader Nigel Farage have called for El-Fattah's citizenship to be revoked so he can be removed from the UK on account of his racist and anti-British views.

It is hard to see how any right-thinking person could disagree.

But he cannot be deported because his social media posts, twisted out of context according to him, do not meet the threshold for removal.

So under this weak and self-serving government he will be allowed to stay in another victory for extremists.

British Jews cowering in fear at what is unraveling on the streets blame the government, two-tier policing, and institutional cowardice, for the appeasement of extremists.

And now this. Until politicians find the fortitude to act in this country's interests it is inevitable those who seek to harm us, and our way of life, will continue to do just that.

Heed hero's warning

TODAY is traditionally a day of celebration as we salute great British heroes showered with gongs in the New Year Honours.

Many, like the actor and activist Idris Elba and Olympic ice skating legends Torvill and Dean, are household names whose awards are richly deserved.

But among those feted by King Charles is a lionhearted warrior who had a front-row seat during one of history's darkest chapters.

Hero D-Day veteran Mervyn Kersh, 101, has not sought fame, fortune, or fanfare but his duty and service to this country during the Second World War marks him out as a giant among men.

For him, as a proud Jewish soldier, the Second World War was a personal crusade.

Mervyn was choosing his words carefully when he described what was happening to Britain as "disappointing".

But when a man who made it his personal mission to fight fascism warns where unchecked hatred leads, we should take heed, because he stared it in the face.

New Year's freeze

IT'S never dull weather-wise, is it? Those dreaming of a White Christmas were left disappointed but parts of Britain are set to become a winter wonderland as we welcome the New Year .

Heavy snow showers are on the way, according to Met Office forecasters.

Still, at least it gives us something to talk about…and it's only 360 days until Christmas!

There's hope for the monarchy but it's nope to Sir Keir

Around half of Brits think well of the royals...or most of them Picture: JORDAN PECK/GETTY

Kelly Beaver
Guest columnist

IT WAS A year when Britain took stock. But as 2025 ends after nearly 18 months of a Labour government, honeymoon optimism evolved into a more searching, sometimes sceptical national mood with definite hints of buyer's regret.

One of the most striking findings from the last 12 months came from our Economic Optimism Index, which fell to its lowest level since records began in 1978, with a net score of -68 in April.

Three in four Britons expected the economy to worsen over the next 12 months, and just 7% believed it would improve – a bleak outlook not seen in past recessions, financial crises or even the pandemic.

This is bad news for Rachel Reeves and Keir Starmer – both of whom sit on record low approval ratings – because the cost of living continued to figure prominently in our trend tracker of what issues matter most to voters alongside immigration and the NHS.

Despite increased global threats, defence and security were not top of mind, rarely breaking into the top ten issues. Nearly half of adults (48%) said there were no circumstances in which they would be willing to take up arms for Britain. Just 35% said there were situations where they would.

Our voting intention polling made grim reading for Labour, while Reform UK reached record highs, at one point enjoying around 34% support.

Both Labour and the Conservatives registered unusually low shares – 18% and 16% in our most recent polling – a reminder of widespread dissatisfaction with mainstream parties and politics.

THIS time it's personal. Just 13% are satisfied with Keir Starmer as a leader, giving him a net satisfaction rating of -64, the lowest of any party leader and a 20 point drop since the start of 2025.

The odds of a Labour leadership challenge in 2026 are shortening. Head-to-head against potential successors, only Andy Burnham had the jump on Starmer with a 13-point lead. Wes Streeting and Ed Miliband trail him by 6 points and 8 points respectively.

The monarchy had another year in the headlines, both good and bad. Ipsos polling shows that around half of Britons continue to have a favourable view of the Royal Family, and over half think King Charles III is doing a good job as monarch.

However, the public view of Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor was scathing. Only around 9% had a favourable opinion of him in our most recent polling, and 90% felt it was the right decision to strip him of his titles.

Attitudes towards the monarchy itself remain more positive. A majority think Britain will still have a monarchy in 50 years' time, and approval ratings for Charles, William and Kate have maintained in the high 60s and early 70s throughout the year.

One of the more unexpected national conversations of 2025 was about masculinity.

The reaction to Adolescence, followed by Sir Gareth Southgate's BBC Dimbleby Lecture, tapped into wider unease about what it means to grow up male in modern Britain.

Ipsos's Modern Masculinity research shows a far more nuanced picture than many headlines suggest.

While 77% of Britons disagree that a man who stays at home to care for children is "less of a man", 51% of men aged 16-24 say efforts to promote gender equality have gone so far that they now discriminate against men.

Young men may reject dated perceptions of toughness, yet they also struggle with unclear role models and social pressures amid rapid cultural change.

AND YET, beneath the forecasts of unrest and recession, Ipsos data suggests something more resilient at work. While three-quarters of Britons think 2025 was a bad year for the country, less than half say it was a bad year for themselves or their family, a gap that has quietly widened in recent years.

More strikingly, 58% believe 2026 will be a better year for them personally, and a growing share, 32% (up nine points on last year), think optimism itself is set to return.

Even at moments of profound national pessimism, Britons continue to separate their private hopes from their public anxieties. It is a reminder that while confidence in institutions may be fragile, confidence in our own capabilities endures.

● *Kelly Beaver is CEO of Ipsos UK*

'Almost half of adults would not be willing to fight for Britain'

Esther McVey

The voice of common sense

Rewrite chapter of Canterbury fails

THE top of the 'to do' list for the incoming Archbishop of Canterbury Sarah Mullally should be to scrap the ludicrous £100million reparation payments agreed in response to the discovery of the Church of England's historic links with the slave trade during the 18th and 19th centuries.

The money the church holds

was given to them to support parishes and priests, not to bankroll left-wing ideological vanity projects and virtue signalling.

The Church should spend its money on their churches, many of which are in need of significant repairs, and focus on helping the poor and needy in our own communities.

Let's hope the new Archbishop of Canterbury, above, can bring some much-needed common sense to the Church of England.

Rachel floored by Boxing Day blues

WHAT will it take for Rachel from Accounts to acknowledge that her policies are running the economy into the ground?

Only last week, data showed that Boxing Day sales slumped compared with last year as shoppers have less disposable income due to Reeves' tax hikes.

We also had the UK's ninth richest man – John Fredriksen – joining the exodus of people leaving the country saying "Britain has gone to hell". We can all see it, why can't she?

Heroes on my wish list deserve honour

THE New Year Honours List always sparks a huge amount of debate – with questions being asked as to whether the recipients are truly deserving and why others were overlooked? Obviously, it is impossible to produce a list which commands universal support. These things are – by their very nature – subjective, but here is a selection of people I believe should be recognised in this year's list...

The first is Archie Norman, Chairman of M&S. How Archie has neither been knighted nor made a Lord is a mystery to me. Without doubt he is one of the greatest business people we have ever produced.

In the 1990s, he took ASDA from the verge of bankruptcy to being one of the most successful retailers in the UK; transformed the fortunes of ITV when the station was considered doomed and is now working his magic at M&S. Because of him, tens of thousands of jobs have been either saved or created, and it is high time his enormous contribution to business life in the UK was recognised.

Next, Rugby League legend Kevin Sinfield. He's raised more than £10m for motor neurone disease following the diagnosis of his former Leeds Rhino team-mate Rob Burrow, running endless marathons. He's pretty much dedicated his life to fundraising and raising awareness of MND and if there is any justice at all he will be awarded a knighthood as well.

Harry Redknapp is not only one of the most successful English football managers of his generation; he is also one of the country's most popular. Anyone who has spent any time with Harry, below, knows he cannot walk five steps without someone stopping him for a chat, an autograph or a selfie, such is his appeal, and he makes time for everyone. He also quietly does a huge amount for charity.

Debbie Moore, founder and owner of Pineapple Dance Studios, is a pioneer. The first woman to float her company on the UK stock exchange in the 1980s and still runs Pineapple today with the same passion. She has achieved everything whilst caring for her disabled daughter, and has done an enormous amount to make dance accessible to people with a wide range of disabilities.

Debbie was awarded an OBE back in 2010, but really, she deserves to be made the Dame of dance.

Lucinda Ellery is one of the world's most eminent hair loss experts. The support Lucinda has provided to women suffering from cancer, burns, unsightly scars and alopecia has attracted plaudits from across the globe. With studios up and down the UK and in the US, Lucinda, too, should be recognised.

Finally, it's high time Peter Chapman and Richard Raymond are recognised for their ingenious Christmas tree collection scheme which has raised more than £2m for their local East Cheshire hospice, and their scheme has also helped 180 hospices across the UK to raise funds too.

To those who are in the Honours List I extend my congratulations, but all the above would certainly feature if I was drawing up the list.

Wonderfully Wicked treat for goddaughter Anna and me

FOR a Christmas treat I took my eight-year-old goddaughter to see Wicked. As much as I was looking forward to spending time with Anna, I wasn't looking forward to her choice of film. How wrong I was. It was an eye-popping, action-packed extravaganza and in true Ariana Grande style, above, I've been singing from the rooftops how wonderful it was ever since.

ARE you making a New Year's resolution? If so you are in the minority. I don't tend to make specific resolutions as such, although I'm not averse to making a few for my husband Phil, such as exercise more and eat less unhealthy food – but if history's anything to go by they're doomed to fail in the finest tradition of New Year resolutions!

JUDGMENT DAY LOOMS FOR OUR WOEFULLY MISGUIDED PRIME MINISTER

ONE man who has had a woeful year is Keir Starmer, and it appears that his judgment at the end of the year is just as impaired as it was at the beginning.

First of all he has given a peerage – a place in the House of Lords for life – to a supporter despite knowing he campaigned for a man charged with (and later convicted of) child sex offences. What on earth is he thinking? What kind of message does that send out?

But worse than that, he posted a tweet expressing his "delight" that Alaa Abd El-Fattah is back in the UK and stating that his case "has been a top priority for my government since we came to office". This is a man who is an anti-Semite who has said "there is a critical number of Israelis we need to kill".

The sooner Starmer's booted out of office, the better.

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Slimming World

Mieka Smiles

Local Matters

AS a councillor it can sometimes feel like you get nothing right. Win funding for a new bench and some will be chuffed to have a new place to rest their legs. Simultaneously, there'll be others convinced said bench is a beacon for antisocial behaviour. It can be hard to please everyone.

The stakes are raised to a whole new level when something major is proposed – a retail outlet that could cause a gridlock, a late-night venue or a whopping new housing estate.

I understand the accusations of NIMBYism but, I'm proud to be a NIMBY if that means making sure residents' thoughts are listened to before miles of fields are concreted over. In my ward of Nunthorpe in Middlesbrough, where I serve as a Conservative councillor, this has been an ongoing issue since my election and for many moons before.

As councillors and community leaders, we have worked hard to get residents what they deserve, with our area often taking the brunt of the town's new housing. A long-awaited community centre, a new GP surgery and funding for local schools have all happened thanks to locals who really care.

So I was dismayed to hear Keir Starmer could rock the very foundations of these local powers. His new plot is to curb council planning committees – elected councillors – of their right to decide on small developments, with decisions handed over to "expert trained planners".

The Local Government Association has warned: "Planning committees are the democratic backbone of the planning system, with councils being accountable to their communities about what should be built where. This is a central tenet that must remain under a reformed planning system."

Shadow housing secretary Sir James Cleverly has the measure of it, saying Labour risks "bulldozing through communities, overriding local democracy and concreting over the countryside".

Yes, we need to stop opposing development just for the sake of it – after all, most of us live on land that was once a field. But Starmer, as usual, has got it so wrong.

It's greedy developers that need to be held to account. They should be forced to pay for proper infrastructure and build communities that make sense rather than making vague promises before moving on with their diggers.

First local elections across the country face cancellation. Now there's a ploy to quietly strip away powers from those elected to fight our corner and protect our interests. At first sight, I totally get it looks like a dry planning tweak. But on closer inspection, it's all about stripping local voices from the picture and handing power to faceless "experts". And I think that should worry everyone.

IT'S THAT time of year (well… soon) when our collective attentions will turn to health, fitness and purging the excesses of the gout-inducing season.

I'm not usually one to be all virtuous and reinvent myself come January. But last year I did do something that I was rather proud of: I ditched alcohol for not just January but February too. Two entire months and not one sip passed my lips.

It didn't take long before I was feeling bloody marvellous. I'm not sure what that says about my alcohol consumption exactly… but I was less tired, less puffy and more productive than most of my adult life.

I'd absolutely recommend it. Will I do it again? Meh… let's not get carried away now.

KYLIE Minogue will still be celebrating her Christmas number one, XMAS, I'm certain. I grew up with the Australian popstrel and still dance around the bedroom to many of her 80s and 90s classics with a hairbrush. And yet after nearly 40 years in the game, this is her very first festive chart-topper.

I must say I'm a little disappointed with her latest effort. The clue, when it comes to Christmas, is in the title.

As well as a time for fun and festivities, it's a time to celebrate the birth of Christ. Of course, some people are more religious than others. But striking out Christ is just not on. It's a lesson I learned as a child and one I'll pass on to my children. Come on, Kylie – do better!

mieka.smiles@reachplc.com

Joshua crash horror

Boxer in 'stable condition' as two friends in same car are killed

BY **DAN WARBURTON**

ANTHONY Joshua winced in agony as he was pulled shirtless from the twisted wreckage of a car smash in which two of his pals were killed in Nigeria.

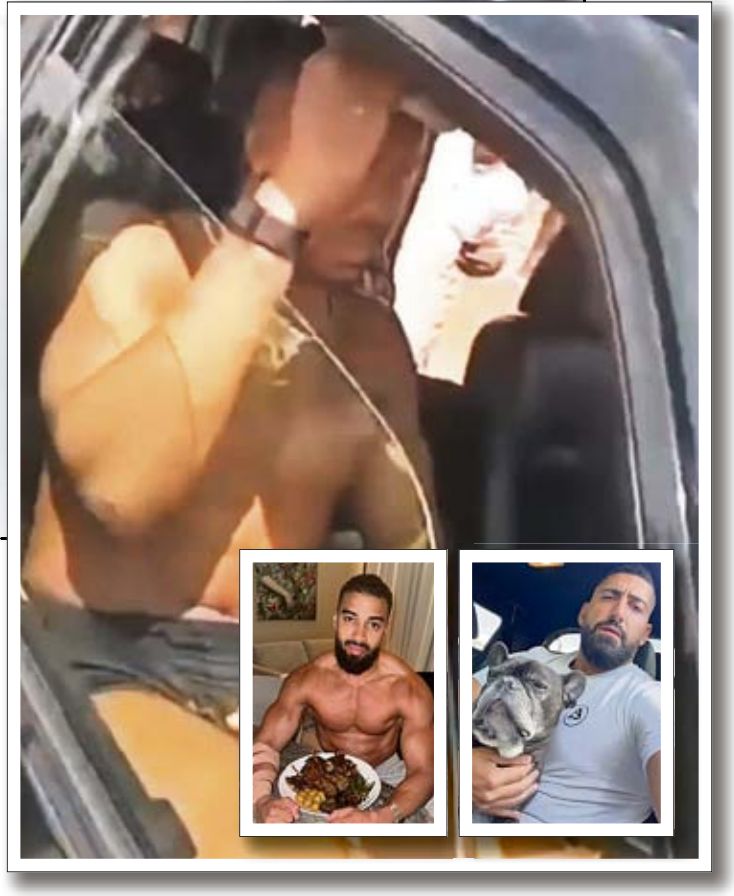
The British boxing superstar, 36, was pictured moments after emerging from the mangled shell of a Lexus SUV in which he was injured.

Ex-heavyweight champion Joshua is on holiday after knocking out YouTuber-turned-boxer Jake Paul, 28, in a £70million bout on December 19.

Joshua, who has Nigerian heritage, came within inches of death in the back seat when the car crashed into a stationary truck, but was said to be in a "stable" condition.

The two men who died were named as Latif Ayodele and Sina Ghami. Ghami was Joshua's longtime friend and strength and conditioning coach, while former non-league footballer Latif served as his personal trainer.

Joshua defeated YouTube star turned boxer Jake Paul earlier this month



Joshua sits in a car after being carried, top right, from the wreckage, left. Two of his close friends and team members, Latif Ayodele, inset right, and Sina Ghami, inset far right, were killed in the horror crash

Emergency workers raced to the scene near a petrol station in Makun on the busy Lagos-Ibadan expressway shortly after 11am yesterday. The 80-mile expressway is one of the country's deadliest routes, having claimed 73 lives in the last three months.

The Ogun State government said in a statement: "We extend our deepest sympathies to the families of those who lost their lives.

"Anthony Joshua and another passenger were evacuated to a specialised medical facility in Lagos. Following comprehensive clinical assessments, doctors have confirmed that both patients are stable and do not require any emergency medical intervention. A full medical team will continue to monitor them closely."

It is understood Joshua was seated behind the driver, along with another passenger, when the crash occurred, and that no other members of his family were present. Four people were inside the Lexus, while his security followed in a separate vehicle.

Authorities said the SUV is believed to have been travelling "beyond the legally prescribed speed limit" and lost control in an "overtaking manoeuvre", before crashing into a parked truck.

Dramatic footage posted online shows passers-by helping a visibly shaken Joshua from the mangled wreck.

A witness told Punch newspaper: "Joshua was seated behind the driver, with another person beside him. There was also a passenger sitting beside the driver.

"Other eyewitnesses and I began the rescue and flagged down oncoming vehicles to assist. A few minutes after the crash, officials arrived. The passenger beside the driver and [the one beside] Joshua died on the spot." A friend of Joshua said: "He's OK but badly shaken up. Nobody knows quite what damage has been done, but was able to escape the wreckage. Others weren't so lucky. It's been a traumatic ordeal which he's trying to process."

Matchroom Boxing and Joshua's promoter Eddie Hearn said: "With profound sadness it has been confirmed two close friends and team members Sina Ghami and Latif Ayodele have tragically passed away.Matchroom Boxing can confirm that Anthony sustained injuries in the accident and is stable." Hearn later posted: "Two great men. Rest in eternal peace Sina and Latz. My thoughts and deepest prayers are with everyone."

Joshua, who has a tattoo of Africa on his right shoulder, landed in Nigeria on Sunday after fighting Paul in Miami on December 19. He is a regular visitor to Sagamu, a town in Ogun State where his family are from.

The star shared a snap of himself and a friend at the swimming pool on Instagram on Christmas Eve.

The heavyweight knocked out Paul, 28, in six rounds. The YouTuber posted yesterday: "Life is much more important than boxing. I am praying for the lost lives, AJ and anyone impacted by today's unfortunate accident."

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NO I.D. Challenge 25 NO SALE

Suspected palm oil on Ramsgate Main Sands

Beach risk to dogs as 'barrels' of oil wash up

BY **ISOBEL WILLIAMS**

DOG walkers have been urged to be vigilant after a fatty substance that can be highly dangerous to their pets washed up on three beaches.

Coastguard officers in Kent said they found a barrel-shaped lump of what is believed to be palm oil at Ramsgate Main Sands on Saturday.

Officers have warned dog owners to steer clear while Thanet District Council said it will also put up warning signs after further sightings were reported at Margate Main Sands and Botany Bay.

HM Coastguard Margate said of the find: "Please, if you are out walking keep your dog on a lead and definitely do not allow them to eat it. We have notified the local council for removal."

Dangerous

Palm oil is widely used in the food and cosmetics industries. Its high fat content can cause complications such as vomiting, pancreatis or intestinal blockages when ingested by dogs..

When washed up on the coast it can also be contaminated with ship pollutants such as diesel.

Thanet District Council said: "The council has been notified of sightings of white, waxy deposits which might be palm oil, on the foreshore at Margate Main Sands, Ramsgate Main Sands and Botany Bay.

"As a precaution, it is important dogs are kept on leads in the areas impacted and that owners do not allow their pets to eat the deposits."

Chelsea goes bats for night garden

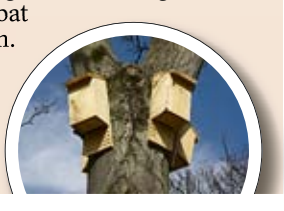
BY **EMILY BEAMENT**

GARDENERS will be encouraged to think of bats at May's Chelsea Flower Show.

The Bat Conservation Trust's design by Melanie Hick features a 10ft bat-like sculpture, a boundary built from bat boxes, minimal lighting, and a low-edged pond.

The planting – which feeds the insects that bats eat – includes foxgloves and oregano.

Four of the 18 UK bat species face extinction. Melanie said: "Our garden exists as a powerhouse for biodiversity well into the night."



Isobel with her parents Tamara and Aaron

Heartbreak of drowned tot's family

BY **DAVE HIGGENS**

THE mum of a toddler who drowned after falling into a pond on Christmas Day has paid tribute.

Tamara Wallace, mum of two-year-old Isobel, said the family have been "suffocated with love".

And she thanked well-wishers after a GoFundMe appeal set up by the girl's aunt Abigail Maxwell raised more than £30,000 by yesterday afternoon.

It will go towards a memorial fairy garden in Isobel's memory.

Magic

Ms Wallace said: "We want people to remember Isobel for the magic girl she was, and the adventure and fire she had in her soul, not for her sad passing."

The "tragic accident" occurred during a family gathering in Doncaster.

Ms Maxwell said Isobel disappeared "for a moment" before she was found in the water. She added the pond was there when the family moved into their "forever home" and it had a temporary fence.

Mum and two children die in Boxing Day blaze

Tom lost wife Fionnghuala and children Eve and Ohner in fierce fire at home

Police officer father battles in vain to save wife and kids

BY **ROD MINCHIN**

A MOTHER who died alongside her two young children in a blaze was named yesterday, while her husband, who fought desperately to save them, remained in hospital.

Fionnghuala Shearman, 38, known to friends as Nu, daughter Eve, seven, and son Ohner, four, perished as the inferno tore through their Cotswolds home on Boxing Day.

Husband Tom, a police officer, escaped the fire which engulfed the family home near Stroud.

Police said Mr Shearman was beaten back by flames as he made multiple attempts to save his wife and two children who were trapped inside.

Det Supt Ian Fletcher said: "We have multiple witnesses to the anguish he was going through at his inability to get in and save his children and wife.

"He is very distraught. He has sadly lost his family at a time which is supposed to be a happy festive period."

Det Supt Fletcher said the couple had been woken by the blaze at 3am and tried to reach their children in the rear bedroom. He added: "They have been unable to get to the back bedroom due to the voracity of the fire.

"The father has smashed his way out of the house through a bathroom window to try to access the children's bedroom via the outside.

"He has been unable to enter the property via that bedroom window."

Det Supt Fletcher said Mr Shearman tried to re-enter his home to save his wife and children but could not due to the "ferocity and heat" of the blaze.

He added: "He has then tried to re-enter through the bathroom window, by which stage the fire has taken hold in the bathroom and he's unable to get back into the bedrooms.

The roof of the mid-terrace stone cottage in the Cotswolds collapsed during fire

Shellshocked

"He has gone downstairs and tried to force entry via the front and the back door but has been unable to get back in. At this point emergency services attended and started dealing with that fire."

It was thought to have started on the ground floor and is not considered suspicious, said Det Supt Fletcher.

The terraced Cotswold stone cottage roof fell in and ceilings and stairs collapsed. A family friend said: "We are all shellshocked. We don't know what happened."

Deputy chief fire officer Nathaniel Hooton said the house was well ablaze when crews arrived.

He added: "They tried their hardest to get in there and do whatever was necessary, and they continue to work extremely hard to support the recovery of the unfortunate loss of life."

Gloucestershire Police Federation said: "This is an unimaginable tragedy and our hearts are broken."

Bondi hero: I saved lots but feel sorry for the lost

Ahmed bravely grabs the terrorist's gun at Bondi

BY **ANDERS ANGLESEY**

A HERO shopkeeper has spoken publicly for the first time about tackling a gunman during the Bondi terror attack in Australia.

Ahmed Al Ahmed said he disarmed Sajid Akram to stop more people dying in Sydney.

Mr Ahmed, who was shot four times, said: "My target was just to take the gun from him, and to stop him killing innocent people.

"I know I saved lots, but I feel sorry for the lost." Describing the moment caught on film when he leapt on to the gunman's back to wrestle the firearm away, he said: "I hit him. I hold him with my right hand and start saying a word, you know, like to warn him, drop your gun, stop doing what you're doing.

"And emotionally, I'm doing something, which is I feel something, a power in my body, my brain...I don't want to see people killed in front of me, I don't want to hear his gun, I don't want to see people screaming and begging, and that's my soul asking me to do that."

Heroic shopkeeper speaks on television yesterday

Fifteen people died and dozens more were injured when gunmen opened fire on a crowd of more than 1,000 celebrating Hanukkah in Bondi's Archer Park on December 14.

One alleged gunman, Naveed Akram, faces 59 charges, while his father, Sajid, was shot dead by police at the scene.

Mr Ahmed's interview with CBS was due to air yesterday. His parents told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation he had been shot four to five times in the shoulder.

More than 40,000 people raised $2.5million in a fundraiser for the 43-year-old. The cheque was presented to him at his hospital bed by co-organiser Zachery Dereniowski.

Australia will establish an award for those like Mr Ahmed who confront "the worst of evil". The country's Department of Home Affairs has since fast-tracked and granted visa applications for members of his family, which also include temporary visas for his siblings.

Family man David Darke, 66

Murder rap over Xmas pub attack

BY **STEPHANIE WAREHAM**

A MAN has been charged with the murder of a 66-year-old who died days after being punched outside a pub.

David Darke suffered a serious head injury near the Crown Inn in Appleby Magna, Leics, on December 21. The father of three died in hospital on Saturday.

Nathan Gothard, 36, from the village, yesterday appeared at Leicester magistrates' court charged with Mr Darke's murder and was remanded in custody to appear at the city's crown court tomorrow.

Mr Darke's family said: "Dave was a deeply loved father to three daughters and a proud grandfather to three boys."

Officer at scene of shooting in Thetford yesterday

Suspected gunman shot dead by police

Horror at scene of crash

ARMED police shot and killed a suspected gunman following a two-vehicle crash.

Officers were called to a collision on the A11 in Thetford, Norfolk, at around 8.25pm on Sunday.

A man in his 60s, believed to be the driver of one of the vehicles, left the scene holding what was described by police as a handgun.

The suspect was then shot by armed officers a short distance away. Despite the efforts of emergency services he was pronounced dead .

BY **LAUREN BEAVIS**

The Independent Office for Police Conduct, which is now investigating, confirmed a "non-police issue firearm" was recovered from the scene.

Assistant Chief Constable David Buckley, of Norfolk Constabulary, said: "We understand this incident will cause concern in the community.

"Our highly trained armed officers deploy to hundreds of firearms-related calls each year, but incidents where police discharge firearms are thankfully incredibly rare.

"A full and independent investigation is already under way. We are of course cooperating fully with the IOPC investigation and will be handing over all bodyworn footage and 999 calls to ensure transparency.

"We are not looking for anyone else in connection with the incident."

IOPC director Amanda Rowe said the investigation was in its early stages. She added: "Our thoughts are with the man's family and everyone affected by this incident.

"We will be making contact with the family in due course."

FREE MAGAZINES INSIDE THIS WEEKEND'S

DAILY EXPRESS SUNDAY EXPRESS

55 Brain Games FOR ADULTS

INSIDE SATURDAY 24-pages of puzzles

SUDOKU MEMORY TESTS

ANAGRAMS CODE CHALLENGES

INSIDE SUNDAY healthy eating recipe magazine

Slimming World eat well feel well

Film star Brigitte Bardot

Bardot to be buried in garden facing sea

BY **PETER ALLEN**

CINEMA icon Brigitte Bardot is set to be buried in her French Riviera garden overlooking the Med, it emerged yesterday.

The 91-year-old said she wanted the plot at La Madrague, her home near St Tropez, to be her final resting place.

It was there that she died at dawn on Sunday morning, following months of illness.

A Roman Catholic service is expected to be held at Notre Dame de la Garrigue, the chapel on the estate she bought over 70 years ago.

A local government source said: "Brigitte indicated that she wanted La Madrague to be her final resting place.

Charity

"Crowds of people used to file past the estate trying to catch a glimpse of her, and she wanted it to become a museum."

In an interview in 2018, Ms Bardot said: "I embrace the pilgrimage aspect, because I will be buried in the garden. I chose a small spot, close to the sea.

'The formalities have been completed. A specific location has been approved by the authorities, out of sight but near the graves in my pet cemetery."

Ms Bardot's animal charity revealed that she died with her fourth husband, Bernard d'Ormale, by her side. It said: "She whispered her little word of love to him, 'pew pew', and that was it."

There could be a national tribute to Ms Bardot, French government sources indicated.

Her cause of death has not been revealed.

Demi's time to chill out

DEMI Moore revels in the wintry weather at her ranch in Idaho.

The actress, 63, shared festive snaps from the property in Aspen Lakes, showing herself coatless and wearing sandals despite snowfall as she visited ducks on a pond.

The Oscar-nominated star of The Substance was also seen shovelling snow off a verandah on the 10.5-acre property.

Demi, who has daughters Rumer, Scout and Tallulah with ex-husband Bruce Willis, 70, told her 6.6 million Instagram followers: "There's snow place like home for the holidays!

"Wishing you and your family lots of love."

Demi visits ducks and, above, shovels away snow from her ranch house's verandah

Heavy snow to hit parts of UK

Warning over dangers of cold to elderly

BY **CALLUM HOARE**

HEAVY snow showers are on the way across the UK which could hamper travel and create deadly conditions for pensioners.

An amber cold health alert has been issued for the North East and North West of England until noon on Monday with temperatures expected to fall to between 3 and 5C.

It means the weather is "likely" to cause significant impacts across health and social care services, including a "rise in deaths" among those with health conditions or aged 65 or over, said the UK Health Security Agency.

Snow is expected as temperatures drop

Dr Agostinho Sousa said: "As the colder weather sets in it is vital to check in on friends, family and neighbours who are most vulnerable.

"The forecast temperatures can have a serious impact on the health of some people, leading to increased risk of heart attacks, strokes and chest infections, particularly for those over 65 and those with health conditions."

The Alzheimer's Society said cold can be difficult for people with dementia to adjust to and they may not recognise they are suffering or be able to communicate it.

A yellow warning for snow and ice has also been issued for parts of Scotland from 6am on New Year's Day until midnight on January 2. The Met Office said that this means "frequent and heavy snow showers may lead to some travel disruption".

By Friday morning, the Met Office is predicting up to two inches of snow, with double that in certain areas and up to eight inches on higher ground.

More warnings for snow and ice are likely in the new year.

Met Office deputy chief forecaster Mark Sidaway said: "It certainly looks like we are in for a taste of winter as we welcome in the new year. "It looks like this cold spell will last through at least the first week of January."

OPINION: PAGE 12

POOREST ARE WORST-HIT BY CLIMATE CHANGE

HUMAN-induced climate change continued to mostly have an impact on poorer communities in 2025.

Of 22 extreme weather events studied by World Weather Attribution experts, 17 were caused or made worse by climate change. They included floods, heatwaves, storms, droughts and wildfires.

BY **REBECCA SPEARE-COLE**

Prof Friederike Otto, from Imperial College London, said: "Each year, the risks of climate change become less hypothetical and more brutal reality."

Blair ignored warnings not to upset Women's Institute

BY **GAVIN CORDON**

PRIME Minister Tony Blair was heckled off stage by the Women's Institute after ignoring warnings to avoid "capital P politics".

His speech to 10,000 members at Wembley Arena turned into a fiasco as he was also slow handclapped by the WI, furious he had used their conference for a "party political broadcast".

The reaction was widely seen as evidence that New Labour had lost touch with Middle England voters.

Now freshly released papers show Sir Tony received mixed advice after circulating a draft of his speech. Officials cautioned him to avoid party politics, while key advisers, including David Miliband and Alastair Campbell, said it needed to be more political.

A week before he was due to give his address in June 2000, No10 press officer Julian Braithwaite asked the WI leadership what they were expecting.

He told the PM: "They would like you to set out your vision of communities in the future; as they put it, the sort of Britain you want your children to grow up in. They were wary of anything that smacked of capital P politics, and are clearly sensitive to being patronised." But on seeing the draft, special adviser Peter Hyman said: "I do not agree with the premise that this should be a discursive and whimsical speech.

"Arguably it might suit the audience but I do not think it satisfies the political moment that we must seize."

Mr Miliband, also then an adviser, suggested it needed to start laying the ground for the next general election. He wrote: "I think you want this speech to define the policy terrain on our terms. This is not the first speech of the election campaign, and it must not be a policy compendium, but it does need to set out our stall."

Spin doctor Campbell was dismissive, likening it to a speech by the PM's Tory predecessor Sir John Major.

He wrote: "There is not much sense of a recharged, refocused Blair firing on all fronts, and in parts a danger of coming over as rather Majoresque. Where is the sense of the modernising leader spelling out the need for real change and reform, and the further tough choices that will have to be made? It is too complacent."

Looking back years later for a BBC documentary, Sir Tony recalled his WI shame: "I gave them a lecture, they gave me a raspberry."

PM receives a raspberry from 10,000 WI members at Wembley Arena

Sewer hell and blackouts at No10

TONY Blair's administration drew up plans for a multi-million pound renovation of Downing Street, including a "safe haven" under No10's garden.

The scheme – codenamed Project George – would have meant the PM, Chancellor and hundreds of civil servants vacating No10, No11 and No12 for two years.

A March 2005 briefing pack, just released under the 20-year rule, reported Downing Street was so rundown the sewers, mains power and IT systems all regularly failed.

Project George included a two-storey "subterranean suite" with a conference room for 200, which could provide safety in the event of a terrorist attack. A new underground service road would have allowed VIPs to visit No10 without sharing the rear entrance with the bins.

The plans, which also covered 70 Whitehall – the home of the Cabinet Office – included a glass-fronted extension with solar screening to prevent excessive heat, and blast-resistant glazing.

The briefing pack said the tired estate, which dates from the 17th century, was not fitting "for such important a vital office of government".

But the project, which would have been funded by private finance, was shelved with no reason given.

BY **GAVIN CORDON**

Air Miles

THE Cabinet Office is accused of covering up for the Royal Family after it emerged that official papers referring to Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor have been withheld from the National Archives.

An annual release of government papers to the records HQ in Kew, West London, under the 20-year rule includes a No10 file from 2004 and 2005 on royal visits.

The version originally made available to journalists under embargo, so they could prepare stories, included minutes of a meeting where officials discussed the travel plans of various royals – including the former Duke of York.

However the minutes were subsequently redacted from the file before it was made available to the public. The Cabinet Office, which is responsible for transferring the files to the National Archives, blamed an "administrative error" saying they were not intended for release.

A spokesman said: "All records are managed in line with the requirements of the Public Records Act. Any release is subject to an extensive review process, including engaging expert stakeholders."

But Graham Smith, chief executive of anti-monarchy campaign Republic, said there was no justification for withholding the documents, especially since Andrew was stripped of his royal status amid continuing controversy over his links with the paedophile financier Jeffrey Epstein.

Secretive

Mr Smith said: "There should be no royal exemption at all. But this exemption surely doesn't apply to Andrew now he's no longer a royal.

"The most likely reason for this is pressure from the Palace.

"The royals have sought to keep everything under wraps when it comes to Andrew, not to protect him but to protect themselves. The royals are one of the most secretive institutions in the UK. These documents should be released without fear or favour, to allow the public to make informed judgments."

Andrew, 65, has always denied any wrongdoing.

The minutes, seen by journalists before they were pulled from the file, appear to be unexceptionable.

There is discussion by senior Palace and Foreign Office officials about his travel plans as a UK trade envoy – which earned him the nickname "Air Miles Andy" – for China, Russia, south-east Asia and Spain.

Officials also raised whether the Football Association would pay for him to attend Euro 2004 in Portugal as a royal representative.

It was noted that a change to rules for royal travel meant his visits as trade envoy would in future be funded by the Royal Travel Office – rather than UK Trade and Industry – which would have to find an additional £90,000. The retention of the minutes underlines the way files relating to the Royal Family are routinely withheld from release under the Public Records Act.

Files initially released on Andrew were then withdrawn

Queen Mother turned 94 on August 4, 1994

Andy cover-up claims

Diana died in the crash at the D'Alma tunnel, top. Jacques Chirac, above, was French president at the time

Leaders' chat after Di tragedy was kept secret

BY **GAVIN CORDON**

DOWNING Street refused to release details of a conversation between Tony Blair and French president Jacques Chirac following the death in Paris of Princess Diana.

No10 was asked to reveal what was said in the wake of the 1997 car crash when the 2005 Freedom of Information Act came into effect eight years later.

It took Mr Chirac's aides several hours to contact him to inform of the tragedy, leading to intense speculation as to his whereabouts. His chauffeur later claimed the president had been with a mistress.

Papers released to the National Archives at Kew, West London, show No10 was happy in 2005 to release dozens of other official documents relating to Diana's death and arrangements for her funeral.

One official wrote: "I see nothing embarrassing for us as it shows No10 getting on with the job under unique and unexpected circumstances and much of the information is already in the public domain."

Sensitivity

But publication of a memo outlining the discussion between Mr Blair and Mr Chirac was "fundamentally not in the public interest". The file noted: "It is vital the prime minister's conversations with other world leaders are essentially confidential in nature.

"Releasing details of these conversations would be likely to limit the frankness of such conversations in future. This is fundamentally not in the public interest."

There is nothing to indicate if sensitivity over Mr Chirac's movements was a factor.

Among the papers released were telegrams from the British ambassador to France, Sir Michael Jay, describing the hours after Diana's death.

He wrote: "From the president down, the French authorities have dealt with last night's events with extraordinary generosity, efficiency and sensitivity. The emergency services and hospital staff did all they could to save the princess's life."

PM's birthday gaffe to Queen Mum

DOWNING Street was forced to issue a grovelling apology after Prime Minister John Major's birthday telegram to the Queen Mother sparked a royal storm.

His greeting was apparently addressed in an "improper manner", newly released government files reveal.

The papers released to the National Archives in Kew show the Queen Mother's private secretary Captain Sir Alastair Aird telephoned No10

BY **GAVIN CORDON**

demanding an explanation as to why the 1994 birthday greeting had been "incorrectly addressed".

It is not clear from the files what it was about the way the telegram had been presented that caused such outrage in the royal household.

After investigating what had happened, Roderic Lyne in the No10 private office wrote back, apologising for the error but insisting that Downing St staff were not to blame. He wrote: "The message itself, as it left our hands, was entirely correct.

"However, in transmitting it, it appears that British Telecom most unfortunately addressed the telegram in the improper manner which you described," he said.

"I am so sorry that this happened. Our own staff are sticklers for the correct form, as you would imagine.

"Perhaps the solution would be for us to abandon telegrams which seem in any case to be going out of fashion."

Despite the faux pas, the Queen Mother still sent a telegram reply to the Conservative leader, now Sir John, and his wife, Norma, to thank them. She had turned 94 on August 4 that year.

"I was very touched by your kind message of good wishes on my birthday and send you both my warm thanks," she said in her message.

Telegram from Major's office ended in No10 apologising

Mystery of the Cluedough

Game's creator sold rights for £5k

Two of the game's fanous characters

Anthony holds a young Marcia and, inset, with wife Elva, who designed the iconic board

BY **ED CHATTERTON**

IF YOU said Cluedo's invention was committed by a pianist, in a Birmingham kitchen, with time on his hands you would be right.

The real puzzle is why Anthony Pratt did not make a killing by creating what would become the world's second-best-selling board game after Monopoly.

Anthony devised the whodunnit game during the Second World War to make some money. He would go on to sell the foreign rights for £5,000 – and miss out on a fortune.

His daughter Marcia Lewis, 72, has just given one of the first versions of the game, letters and memorabilia to Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, where they will go on show.

She said her dad was content with creating the game which brought "happiness and joy" to millions.

Cluedo was originally called Murder! and was inspired by Anthony's job performing in grand country hotels and stately homes. Marcia's mum Elva designed the board which, apart from the addition of secret passages, has remained little changed.

Both her parents were fans of detective fiction such as Sherlock Holmes and Agatha Christie books.

The game had 10 characters and nine murder weapons when it was provisionally patented in 1944.

Alongside Professor Plum, Reverend Green and Miss Scarlett there were Mr Brown, Mr Gold, Miss Green and Mrs Silver. Their choice of deadly weapons to commit murder included an axe, a cudgel, a bomb, a syringe of poison and a poker.

Waddingtons, who patented the game in 1949, changed the Colonel's name from Yellow to Mustard as yellow, associated with cowardice, was "not fit for a man of military standing".

More than 150 million copies of Cluedo have been sold globally and spawned dozens of editions, books, computer games, a film and inspired TV shows like The Traitors.

Retired civil servant Marcia, of Glamorgan, Wales, said: "I'm very proud of what Mum and Dad helped to create – it is part of people's culture in 40 countries.

"It has brought families together for generations around the Christmas dinner table and all year round. I don't think my parents would have ever imagined how big it would become.

"I think my dad was just proud of what he achieved and wanted to be remembered as creating something which has brought so much joy and entertainment instead of somebody who just made a lot of money. Mum designed the board, it was one of the things Waddingtons kept to the closest design."

Anthony made parts for tanks in the war after work as a pianist dried up and inventing a board game was a side project.

Murder

Marcia thinks the board was inspired by a combination of the grand hotels and stately homes he used to play in. "He was a fan of murder mysteries and I think that's a theme which has captured the imagination ever since."

Anthony was able to pitch his idea to Waddingtons thanks to his neighbour Geoffrey Bull who had contacts there after inventing the pirate game Buccaneer about a decade earlier.

"My dad was also really into criminal psychology, too. At one hotel he played in he met a retired High Court judge who would regale people with his tales of high profile trials and murders which he sat upon. This inspired him I think."

She said Anthony, who held the UK patent until 1965, did not mind the name change and Waddingtons making it for six not eight players improved the game.

Marcia with one of the game's first versions

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Trustpilot

Pictures: PRIMA UK/NICKY JOHNSTON

‘I’ll milk being 50 for all it’s worth’

Kym Marsh is planning to celebrate milestone every month for a year

Kim poses for pictures in Prima magazine

BY **ZARA ZUBEIDI**

KYM Marsh is looking forward to embracing a new chapter as she prepares to celebrate her 50th birthday next year.

The former Coronation Street actress plans to go all out for the occasion in June. “I’m not horrified about turning 50. Isn’t 50 the new 40?,” she says.

“I’m very excited about it – I have already said I’m going to milk it for all it’s worth. I’ve decided that every month for the whole year I’m going to do something to celebrate.

“I don’t plan to turn 50 quietly – half a century needs celebrating.”

Wonderful

Kym certainly has cause for celebration. As well as an impressive showbiz career spanning more than two decades, the star – who will appear in the stage adaptation of cult 90s thriller Single White Female from January – recently revealed she had become a grandmother, or “YaYa”, for the fourth time after her daughter Emilie gave birth to a son on Christmas Day.

Kym shared a picture of Emilie’s son Teddy and stepdaughter Polly holding new brother Bobby alongside the caption: “Well what a wonderful Christmas gift this is!!”

And Kym loves being young enough to do “all the fun stuff” with her grandkids.

She says: “I love being a grandparent… it’s hard to explain. I’ve told friends who’ve asked what the difference is from being a parent, that it’s like you have all the love you have for your children, then an added extra on top. It’s like having a king-size Mars bar – it’s the best.”

Kym is perhaps best known for her role as Michelle Connor in Corrie, but since her exit from Weatherfield in 2019, she has thrown herself into other roles, including Nicky Walters in BBC drama Waterloo Road and, more recently, Channel 5 thriller The Imposter.

She has also turned her hand to theatre, starring in a number of plays and musicals, including Fatal Attraction, 101 Dalmatians and Abigail’s Party.

While Kym, who won a British Soap Award for best newcomer in 2007, has not ruled out a return to the cobbles, she is enjoying being faced with new challenges.

She explains: “I’m still having so much fun away from Corrie – I’m being given so many nice opportunities to play different characters and experience different parts of the industry, whether it’s dramas, musicals or plays, or my co-hosting stuff on Morning Live. I still haven’t quite done everything I want to do.

“I would never rule a return out. Hopefully one day they’ll want me back and I’ll want to go back and it will work well for everyone. But I’m having a lot of fun playing other roles.” It is hard to believe it has now been almost 25 years since Kym skyrocketed to fame on ITV reality show Popstars.

Success

In 2001, she joined Myleene Klass, Danny Foster, Suzanne Shaw and Noel Sullivan to form the group Hear’Say.

Their debut track Pure and Simple was a huge success selling more than 500,000 copies in its first week and over one million that year, making it at that time the fastest-selling debut single in UK chart history. It was followed up with a sell-out tour and a number one album, Popstars.

But the band’s success was short-lived, with Kym quitting the group in 2002 after a series of rows with Myleene. Thankfully, their bust-ups are a thing of the past with Kym revealing the band “all still chat”. And earlier this year, Myleene even defended her former bandmate after a “fat-shaming” video from their time on Popstars resurfaced.

Kym, centre, Noel Sullivan, Suzanne Shaw, Myleene Klass and Danny Foster in Hear’Say

With so many noughties bands reforming, it begs the question, would Kym consider a reunion? She says: “I always laugh and say ‘never say never’ about a Hear’Say reunion. We might pop up somewhere, just for a one-off performance down the line to surprise everyone.”

Whatever Kym decides to do next, she looks back on everything that has happened in life as a learning curve.

She says: “Whether it’s personal life, or career, I feel like I’ve learned something from every chapter of my life. This is a whole new one that’s about to start, so it’s good that I have a clean slate and I’m in a nice place in my life in every aspect.

“I’m feeling good about it all. I want to take care of myself a bit more and prioritise my health and wellbeing. Sometimes I can neglect myself and tend to focus a lot on other people.

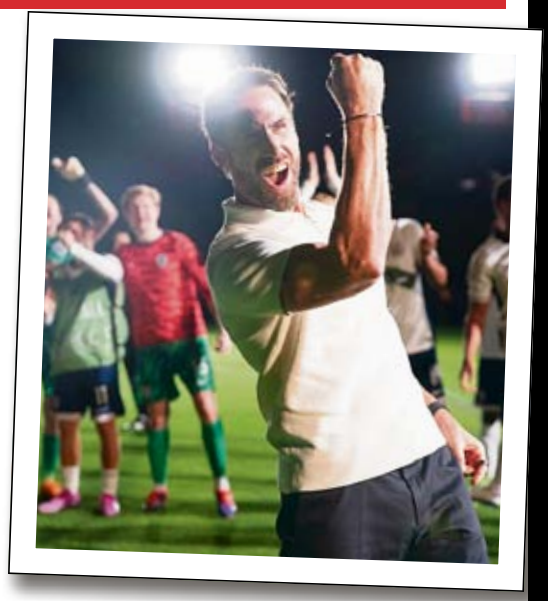
“While I don’t think that’s a bad thing, I need to be able to take time out and do things for me sometimes.”

● *Read the full interview in the February 2026 issue of Prima, out now.*

Reach Wuthering Heights of culture in 2026

Your guide to the best TV, film, books and theatre coming soon

TELEVISION



Run Away
Harlan Coben's star-studded series follows Simon, a man whose seemingly perfect life shatters when his daughter Paige runs away. When he finally finds her again, he is drawn into a dangerous criminal world that forces him to confront long-buried family secrets. James Nesbitt, Tracy-Ann Oberman, Ruth Jones and Minnie Driver all star. From New Year's Day on Netflix.

Lord of the Flies
Adolescence writer Jack Thorne has promised to stay faithful to William Golding's classic novel set in the 1950s about a group of prepubescent British boys stranded on an uninhabited island for its first television adaptation. Each episode is titled after a character at the core of the story – Ralph, Piggy, Simon and Jack – to offer their personal perspective on the unfolding tragedy. Due to air on BBC One during the year.

The Lady
This gripping four-part true crime drama from the makers of The Crown charts the extraordinary rise and fall of Jane Andrews (Mia McKenna-Bruce), the rags-to-riches former royal dresser for Sarah Ferguson (Natalie Dormer), who in 2001 was convicted of stabbing her lover to death. Due on ITV1.

Missed Call
When single mother Sarah discovers that her daughter Katie has gone missing on her school exchange trip, she is horrified to learn she missed a late-night call from her. Travelling to the idyllic French village where her daughter was staying, Sarah arrives to find the host family and local police disturbingly unconcerned. Joanna Scanlan, Rupert Graves and Robert Lindsay all star in the five-part thriller. Due on Channel 5 in the spring.

Betrayal
The fragile, tangled web of human relationships is explored in this four-part spy thriller set against the backdrop of MI5. John Hughes plays Shaun Evans, a mid-career MI5 officer navigating a rapidly evolving intelligence landscape while struggling to keep his personal life intact. Due on ITV1 during the year.

Agatha Christie's Seven Dials
Based on the crime author's classic mystery, this limited series is written by Chris Chibnall and directed by Chris Sweeney. Mia McKenna-Bruce leads another cast, this time also including Helena Bonham Carter, Martin Freeman, Ed Bluemel, Corey Mylchreest and Nabhaan Rizwan. Begins on ITV1 on January 15.

The Walsh Sisters
A gripping new drama series inspired by five of the novels from bestselling Irish author Marian Keyes, The Walsh Sisters features the chaotic, dysfunctional but loveable brood of five sisters and their devout mother and bemused father. Danielle Galligan and Aiden Quinn star. Due on BBC One during 2026.

East of Eden
John Steinbeck's epic 1952 novel, often considered his masterpiece, traces the lives of the Trask family as they wrestle with love, betrayal, identity and the struggle between duty and free will. Florence Pugh stars as the enigmatic Cathy Ames and Christopher Abbott as Adam Trask. Due on Netflix in early 2026.

Dear England
Joseph Fiennes, *above*, stars as Gareth Southgate in this screen adaptation of James Graham's smash hit National Theatre play of the same name. The four-part series is an examination of both Southgate's tenure as England football manager and our national identity. Due on BBC One later in the year.

Half Man
Created, written and starring Richard Gadd of Baby Reindeer fame, this original six-part series follows the troubled relationship of estranged "brothers" Niall, played by Bafta-winning actor Jamie Bell, and Ruben (Gadd) through years of highs and lows. Due on BBC One.

Young Sherlock
Andrew Lane's book series about the young Sherlock Holmes is brought to life in Guy Ritchie's eight-part series. Studying at Oxford, an unruly and unrefined Holmes (Hero Fiennes-Tiffin) unravels a globe-trotting conspiracy, culminating in an explosive showdown that changes his life forever. From March 4 on Amazon Prime.

Lynley
A slick new adaptation of the Inspector Lynley novel series by Elizabeth George. East Anglian local and Horsford native DS Barbara Havers (Sofia Barclay) is paired with incoming Oxford graduate DSI Thomas Lynley (Leo Suter) to solve the murder of a wealthy landowner. From January 5 on BBC One.

The Age of Innocence
Edith Wharton's classic tale about social convention set in 19th century New York high society gets the Netflix treatment. It follows Newland Archer, who is engaged to the poised and proper May Welland, but finds himself increasingly drawn to her unconventional cousin Countess Ellen Olenska. Due on Netflix during the year.

The Cage
Bafta winner Sheridan Smith and Michael Socha (This is England) star as two Liverpool casino employees who discover they are both planning to rob the same safe in this high-stakes, high-energy crime story. Due on BBC One later in the year.

Kill Jackie
Anticipation is running high for this revenge thriller from the makers of Killing Eve, based on Nick Harkaway's novel The Price You Pay, as it's reported to be Catherine Zeta-Jones' big comeback in a lead role. She plays the title character, a wealthy con artist living the high life, who discovers a terrifying hit squad called The Seven Demons is out to kill her. Due on Amazon Prime Video.

The Other Bennet Sister
Pride and Prejudice's overlooked middle sister Mary Bennet is the subject of this beautifully shot series. It follows Mary, played by Ella Bruccoleri (Call the Midwife, Bridgerton) as she steps out of her sisters' shadows in search of her own identity. Richard E Grant and Ruth Jones star as Mr and Mrs Bennet. Due on BBC One.

...and welcome back to The Night Manager, This City is Ours, The Gilded Age, Red Alert, Rivals, Bridgerton and House of the Dragon.

CINEMA

Wuthering Heights
Released February 14
Purists, look away! Saltburn director Emerald Fennell's film adaptation of Emily Bronte's heart-thumping classic love story promises to be a steamy, shocking affair. A racy trailer has already raised eyebrows. Jacob Elordi and Margot Robbie play star-crossed lovers Heathcliff and Cathy.

Peaky Blinders: The Immortal Man
Released March 6
Set during the Second World War, gang leader Tommy Shelby returns to a bomb-ravaged Birmingham where he becomes involved in secret wartime missions as he reckons with his past. Cillian Murphy is joined by returning cast members and newcomers Rebecca Ferguson, Tim Roth and Barry Keoghan.

The Devil Wears Prada 2
Released May 1
Expect high fashion and lots of drama as one of the 21st century's most beloved films makes its return. This time the heels are off as Miranda Priestly (Meryl Streep) comes to blows with her former assistant Emily (Emily Blunt) after magazine print sales plummet. Anne Hathaway's Andy Sachs is also back alongside Stanley Tucci, with Kenneth Branagh joining the cast.

The Odyssey
Released July 17
Christopher Nolan's eagerly anticipated action fantasy film is a big-screen adaptation of Homer's ancient Greek epic poem, chronicling the long and perilous journey home taken by Odysseus, the Greek king of Ithaca, after the Trojan War. The A-list cast features Matt Damon, Anne Hathaway, Tom Holland, Robert Pattinson and Zendaya.

Practical Magic 2
Released September 18
Following a 27-year hiatus from our screens, Practical Magic returns with the Owens sisters attempting to break the curse that prevents them from finding true love. Sandra Bullock and Nicole Kidman reprise their roles as Sally and Gillian, with support from Stockard Channing and Maisie Williams.

Ebenezer: A Christmas Carol
Released November 13
Johnny Depp, Ian McKellen and Andrea Riseborough star in this remake of the classic Dickens tale. Horror director Ti West has put a darker slant on the ghostly themes, with Scrooge's own psychological torture and supernatural elements brought to the fore.

Get ready for fresh takes on old classics, the comfort blanket of firm favourites and bold new works

Margot Robbie in Wuthering Heights

THEATRE

Dracula: Noel Coward Theatre
From February 4 (draculawestend.com)
Wicked star Cynthia Erivo sinks her teeth into all 23 roles of Bram Stoker's blood-pumping gothic horror in a new show from Kip Williams, the genius behind the jaw-dropping multi-media one-woman Dorian Gray starring Sarah Snook. Fangtastic.

Romeo and Juliet: Harold Pinter Theatre
From March 16 (romeojulietplay.com)
Nay, not another go at Shakespeare's teen tragedy? 'Tis true, gentlefolk, but with Stranger Things star Sadie Sink and Noah Jupe (The Night Manager, A Quiet Place), and directed by Robert Icke, whose recent Oedipus was absolutely electrifying.

Les Liasons Dangereuses: National Theatre
From March 21 (nationaltheatre.org.uk)
Tighten your corsets and flutter your fans, Lesley Manville and Aidan Turner will ignite the stage in Christopher Hampton's adaptation of Choderlos de Laclos' classic tale of sexual manipulation and tortured love in the aristocratic salons of 1780s France. Also starring Monica Barbaro.

Lesley Manville and Aidan Turner

Ivanov: Bridge Theatre
From July 4 (bridgetheatre.co.uk)
Hollywood star Chris Pine makes his London stage debut in a radical modern staging of Chekhov's dark tragicomedy about a man battling middle-aged married malaise with hedonism and infidelity.

Cats: Regent's Park Open Air Theatre
From July 25 (openairtheatre.com)
The original production of Andrew Lloyd-Webber's riff on TS Eliot's poems shut in 2002. Let's hope this can erase Memories of 2019's misbegotten movie.

BOOKS

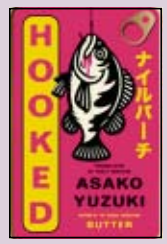
Departure(s) by Julian Barnes (January 22)

The Booker Prize winner's new novel is a powerful tale of old age, illness and memory. Stephen and Jean fall in love when they are young and, again, when they are old, as one of our greatest living novelists ruminates on ageing and remembrance.

Kids, Wait 'Til You Hear This! by Liza Minnelli (March 10)

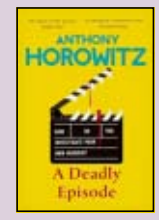
The Oscar-winning performer sets the record straight on growing up in the shadow of her famous mother Judy Garland in her first memoir after becoming fed up with seeing other people telling her story. Expect her meteoric rise to fame, struggles with alcohol and drugs, multiple marriages and famous friendships to feature.

Hooked by Asako Yuzuki (March 12)



Japanese novelist Asako Yuzuki's first English translation Butter, featuring a woman accused of killing men by seducing them with her cooking, was one of the breakout hits of 2025. Her next book Hooked is highly anticipated. Main protagonist Eriko, who works in the seafood industry, befriends a housewife blogger over social media but their friendship soon turns to obsession.

A Deadly Episode by Anthony Horowitz (April 23)

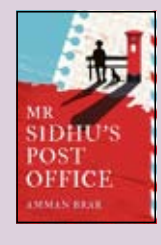


The sixth in the brilliant Hawthorne and Horowitz series takes the bestselling Alex Rider author's mischievousness to a new level – as the first of their pairings, The Word Is Murder, is being turned into a film. When actor David Caine, who is playing Daniel Hawthorne, is killed, the real Hawthorne – joined by his sidekick Anthony Horowitz – is called in to investigate. Layers of fun.

Land by Maggie O'Farrell (June 2)

With the film adaptation of her award-winning book Hamnet due in cinemas on January 9, with Paul Mescal playing Shakespeare, fans of novelist Maggie O'Farrell have a bumper year ahead. The bestselling author returns with Land, set in Ireland in 1865 in the aftermath of the Great Famine and inspired in part by family history.

Mr Sidhu's Post Office by Amman Brar (July 2)



Set against the backdrop of the Post Office scandal, Amman Brar's debut novel is inspired by his own father's "love" of running a Post Office. In 2007, sub-postmaster and widower Mr Sidhu falls for co-worker Rose. But mysterious account losses cast a worrying shadow.

PREVIEW COMPILED BY SAMANTHA WOSTEAR, STEFAN KYRIAZIS AND MATT NIXSON

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Researchers to study baby screen time

BY **ELLA PICKOVER**

PARENTS have a "blind spot" over babies' screen time, a former minister has warned.

The World Health Organisation says children under one should not use screens.

There are fears they can cause long-term issues with attention, communication and problem solving.

Now the 1001 Critical Days Foundation, a charity set up by former health minister Dame Andrea Leadsom, has launched a study into the impact of screen use.

Will Quince, a former education and health minister who is chief executive of the charity, said: "Babies are overlooked – there is a real baby blind-spot.

"Some babies spend more than four hours a day in front of screens.

"It's not about shaming parents, it's about giving parents and carers the information they need to give their baby the best start."

A team from Leeds, Nottingham, Aston and Leeds Trinity universities will work on the study.

Men's PPE risks safety for women

BY **ALAN JONES**

THOUSANDS of women feel unsafe and embarrassed because they are forced to wear personal protective equipment designed for men, a report says.

A survey of hundreds of GMB workers found more than two thirds have had ill-fitting clothing. The union is calling for health and safety laws to be updated to ensure PPE properly fits all.

Three in five women said work clothing was uncomfortable while one in five said they could not do their job due to the problem.

One female custody officer said her "low-rise pants that don't work for a lot of women's body shapes" led to "prisoners making sexual comments about being able to see my underwear".

A textile worker said: "The problem is not just discomfort, it is a safety violation. Oversized gloves create an entanglement hazard and respirators that don't seal properly expose me to hazardous wood dust and chemicals."

Pilot Robert was held in a cell with six others for a fortnight

Briton suffers jail hell after passport stolen in Bulgaria

BY **OLIVIA STRINGER**

A BRITISH pilot said he was held in a Bulgarian detention centre for two weeks – after going to the police to report his passport had been stolen.

Robert Weaver, 38, was thrown in a cell with six others after police said they could not verify his identity.

He got just one meal a day and had to go to the toilet in a hole in the ground.

Robert, from Birmingham, was finally released after contacting the British Embassy on a phone smuggled in by a cellmate.

He said: "My passport was stolen from my hotel room, so I went to report it at the police station across the road.

Relieved

"The police asked me to verify my identity, I told them that would be a bit difficult with my passport missing, but I had copies of my identification online.

"They threw me in a cold cell with no toilets or drinking water and the next day I was transferred to an immigration detention centre. I shared a cell with six people and if you wanted to use the toilet, you had to ask the guards to take you to a hole in the ground.

"You were given one meal a day, basically just rice, and were only allowed outside for 20 minutes to exercise. I spent two weeks in there, and wasn't allowed to call my wife or my father to let them know I was OK. I almost lost my job, as they couldn't get hold of me."

Robert, who had travelled to Bansko to look at a property, said: "I gave police my flight number as well, so they could verify my identity with the immigration at Sofia airport. I also had a property in Bulgaria a few years ago, and was a resident, so it would have been very easy for them to verify my identity."

He said he was denied a lawyer and taken to police HQ where his fingerprints were taken.

Robert added: "They identified me and said, 'We can see that you're not a criminal, you're not wanted'."

Yet he was still held for days before he got through to the embassy on the smuggled phone. Robert said embassy staff were "so apologetic, and had no idea why I was detained".

He added: "My family were so relieved, my dad sounded so choked up when I told him I was safe."

Robert is launching a civil case against the Bulgarian government for illegal detainment. The British Embassy in Sofia said: "We supported a British man who was detained in Bulgaria and were in touch with local authorities."

House price hotspots

Homes in just three places enjoy double-digit rise in values

PLYMOUTH, Stafford and Wigan have been named as the biggest movers and shakers of the property market this year.

The Devon naval city enjoyed the steepest rise in the value of homes – up 12.6% on 2024, according to Lloyds, which analysed its own mortgage data.

Stafford and Wigan also recorded double-digit growth, with prices up by 12.0% and 10.5% respectively.

Wakefield, Mansfield in Nottinghamshire, Woking in Surrey, Liverpool, Rugby in Warwickshire, Falkirk in the Central Lowlands, and Hull also made the top 10 hotspots.

Amanda Bryden, head of mortgages at Lloyds, said: "Our customers' dream homes are found in pockets around the UK and we've supported thousands of people to take their next home-buying step this year.

"While property prices play a role, choosing where to live is also about finding a place that feels right – a community you connect with, a commute that works for you, and a lifestyle that fits you."

The South East dominated the locations where the value of homes fluctuated most dramatically. Crawley in West Sussex suffered the worst knock as 8.9% was wiped off prices.

BY **VICKY SHAW**

Market town High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire was also a big loser – values slid 7.4% – while Chester recorded a 6.4% fall.

However, the cathedral city was an outlier in the region – property values in the North West of England overall were up 3.7%, the report said. Lloyds also reported a 5.2% drop in average property values in Cardiff, despite values in Wales rising by 2.3%.

Beautiful

Ms Bryden added: "If you've got your heart set on a particular location, it's worth taking time out to do some research and see what's happening with prices there, as swings in value at a local level can make a big difference to how much you may need for a deposit, stamp duty or wider moving costs. If you're open to exploring, you might find places where your money goes further.

"Northern regions and Scotland are still generally more affordable than the South of England, with a huge amount to offer in terms of culture and history, alongside some of the most beautiful parts of the UK countryside."

Lloyds compared the 12 months to October 2025 with the same period to October 2024. Locations were only included where Lloyds Banking Group made a minimum of 150 mortgage offers during the period, excluding buy-to-let and shared ownership.

On a less localised level, it said that most parts of the UK recorded growth in the value of homes in 2025.

Northern Ireland led the way with 5.8%, although property values fell in London by 0.1% on average.

Office for National Statistics data for sold properties over the same period show the value of a typical home went up by 1.7% – taking the average to £269,892.

PROPERTY MARKET WINNERS AND LOSERS

Top 5 locations with the biggest increases in average home values:	Top 5 locations with the biggest falls in average home values:
1. Plymouth, South West, £278,808, £31,229, 12.6%	**1.** Crawley, South East, £372,202, minus £36,317, minus 8.9%
2. Stafford, West Midlands, £321,248, £34,516, 12.0%	**2.** High Wycombe, South East, £436,379, minus £34,994, minus7.4%
3. Wigan, North West, £249,562, £23,740, 10.5%	**3.** Chester, North West, £340,415, minus £23,114, minus 6.4%
4. Wakefield, Yorkshire and the Humber, £286,268, £22,887, 8.7%	**4.** Solihull, West Midlands, £390,292, minus £25,976, minus 6.2%
5. Mansfield, East Midlands, £243,251, £19,444, 8.7%	**5.** Worcester, West Midlands, £331,977, minus £21,724, minus 6.1%

30-SECOND CHALLENGE

JUST follow the instructions from left to right, starting with the number given to reach an answer at the end of the row. Set your own 30-second challenge: for the very young or arithmetically rusty, you have 30 seconds for the BEGINNER task. For a greater challenge, try BEGINNER and INTERMEDIATE in 30 seconds. True mental gymnasts should try INTERMEDIATE and ADVANCED in 30 seconds together.

Today's answers can be found in the puzzles pullout

									YOUR ANSWERS
Beginner	26	x2	+4	÷8	+31	x2	+2	÷6	-7	
Intermediate	47	+93	45% OF THIS	+132	÷15	-1	x14	+124	÷4	
Advanced	687	2/3 OF THIS	+73	2/9 OF THIS	-54	TAKE THE CUBE ROOT	x67	+573	TAKE THE SQUARE ROOT	

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY

MONDAY, DECEMBER 29
SET FOR LIFE
8 13 15 25 39 6

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27
LOTTERY
20 36 40 43 51 55 21
THUNDERBALL
3 21 24 26 33 2

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26
EUROMILLIONS
12 22 32 36 48 3 4
THUNDERBALL
3 7 18 23 31 5

THE HEALTH LOTTERY

MONDAY, DECEMBER 29
12 15 22 28 49 34

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28
1 14 17 18 41 16

The Health Lottery has raised more than £135m for health-related causes since 2011. Details at thehealthlotteryfoundation.org.uk

PHONE POLL RESULTS

We asked in our poll on Saturday:
Should the government scrap the early release of prisoners?

YES: 90%
NO: 10%

SUDOKU

Fill in all the squares so that each row, each column, and each 3x3 square contain all the digits from 1 to 9

			2		1	5		8
	5	2	6			1		
1	6			7			3	
		9		8	6	4		
8				5			2	3
			4	2		7		6
5	7			6	3			
		4		1		3	9	
2			8		5			7

This is the Quick Sudoku for the solver in a hurry.
For today's solution call:
09071812571
(Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge)
For extra clues call:
09013225602
(Calls cost 75p plus your telephone company's network access charge)

MORE PUZZLES – PULLOUT
YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

3	8	1	4	9	2	5	6	7
5	6	7	8	1	3	4	2	9
4	2	9	7	6	5	3	8	1
2	4	5	6	3	7	1	9	8
7	3	8	1	4	9	2	5	6
1	9	6	5	2	8	7	4	3
9	1	2	3	8	4	6	7	5
6	7	4	9	5	1	8	3	2
8	5	3	2	7	6	9	1	4

DO YOU HAVE A STORY OR PHOTO?

If you have a story:
020 8612 7077
or email:
expressnews@reachplc.com
If you have a photo:
020 8612 7171
or email:
expresspix@express.co.uk
For general inquiries:
020 8612 7000

WWW.EXPRESS.CO.UK FOR GREAT READER OFFERS

Piston-packin' Lee has engine trouble

LEE Say is on a power trip... he's spent 20 years restoring vintage engines and can't stop.

He now has 16, including a full set of eight prized Lister models. They were used into the 1960s as a reliable stationary power source for machinery – one of Lee's was used in a Leicester cotton mill.

The 34-year-old, from Tadcaster, North Yorks, is still on the hunt for more. He said: "People think it is a bit of a strange hobby. I enjoy the restoration side and the hunt for models I don't own."

No filter required as Lee enjoys his rare collection

Winter Sale

Reader Offer in partnership with **Yimbly.com**

ESPRESSO COFFEE MACHINE WITH MILK FROTHER

Enjoy rich, freshly brewed espresso at home with this compact coffee machine, ideal for starting the day or taking a break.

It brews rich, aromatic coffee and allows you to froth milk easily for cappuccinos and other milk-based drinks. The steam system heats quickly, so there is no long wait before brewing or steaming.

Simple knob controls make operation straightforward, even if you are new to home espresso machines. The built-in cup warmer helps keep coffee at the right temperature. Finished in black and silver stainless steel, this space-saving machine fits neatly on your countertop and is easy to keep clean thanks to its removable drip tray.

- Made from corrosion-resistant stainless steel
- 240ml water tank capacity
- Mechanical knobs for simple, beginner-friendly operation
- Detachable drip tray for quick cleaning

yimbly.com/Offer132 Quote **Offer132** Offer ends 1st February

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Trustpilot

The Crusader Fighting for your rights

By MAISHA FROST

So proud to forever be in readers' corner

RELIEF, resilience and recovery – those were the experiences of many readers in 2025 who enjoyed an uplift in their fortunes after seeking Crusader's support.

One of the biggest turnarounds was the £91,000 a bank customer had returned after it went missing during a funds transfer. Timing was absolutely fundamental in this matter as the money had been earmarked for a new business Alan Atkins was starting.

"I've been warned this could take weeks to sort out and the consequences don't bear thinking about," he told Crusader.

So we jumped on it and, with Halifax's swift action, just over a day later the matter was sorted, including a goodwill gesture for Alan plus any loss of interest.

Trustworthy expertise can be life-changing as veteran biker Cliff Ross, 86, found out when he finally bought a new Yamaha after not daring to before because insurance price comparisons indicated he would be rejected. Crusader consulted broker group Howden Insurance and he has an affordable premium with Aviva.

Plain wrong parking penalty charges and faulty ticket machines continue to plague drivers. Our investigations showed the ones who came to us were right and treated badly so we helped them make a stand. One appeal rejection ruling was reversed for a patient in a hospital car park. For another, assailed by debt threats after doing a U-turn in a public car park but not stopping, his £100-plus charge was deemed a technical fault and has been cancelled.

Given cost of living realities and concerns, the number of energy bill issues that have come our way has been no surprise. While Ofgem's safety net for customers when a supplier goes bust remains invaluable, three areas prone to problems despite improvements with smart meters still occur so are worth noting.

The first concerns customers' responsibilities when changing addresses and keeping track of meter readings. The second is ensuring readings are taken for property rented out. The third is about the actual meters, ensuring installations and updates are done correctly, and no problems like night and day rates being wrongly switched happen. For customer Celia Lloyd getting matters set straight has meant going from a high direct debit to £500 in credit.

● *Names have been changed*

Picture: GETTY

PERSONAL CRUSADE: We have helped people when all hope seemed lost

AND to end on an uplifting note, after struggling with a broken broadband or phone connection, readers perhaps working from home or worrying about being vulnerable routinely describe feeling "bliss" when communications are restored. Crusader has helped achieve many happy reunions and the efforts of network engineers are much appreciated. Any problems, we will always do our best for you. Happy New Year.

If you want help with a problem or wish to applaud good service, we will do our best to help. We can't always promise a reply but please contact The Crusader, Daily Express, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5AP. Email: crusader@express.co.uk. Only send document copies, not originals. ALWAYS INCLUDE YOUR PHONE NUMBER, thank you.

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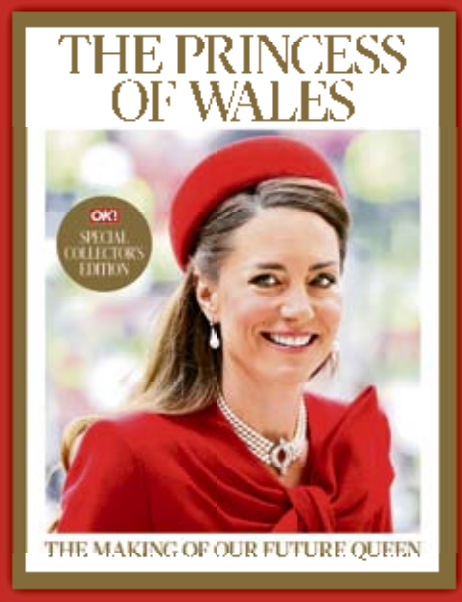

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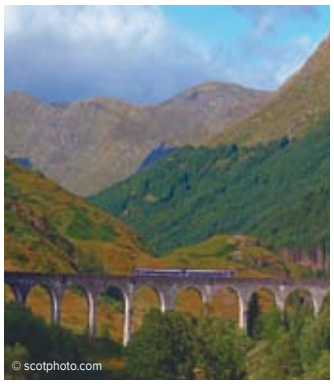
Departs April to October 2026

Experience some of the world's most spectacular scenery as you enjoy journeys on three of Scotland's most celebrated railways.

Sit back in wonder as you enjoy the breathtaking train journey from Inverness – one of Michael Palin's "Great Railway Journeys" – to Kyle of Lochalsh. The dramatic 42 miles of the famous West Highland line from Fort William to Mallaig, and a nostalgic trip on the steam-hauled Strathspey Railway complete an unforgettably scenic few days exploring one of Scotland's most beautiful regions.

Our Price Includes

- Four nights' dinner, bed and Scottish breakfast accommodation at either the Highlander Hotel, Newtonmore, or The Coylumbridge Hotel, Aviemore
- Cross the Glenfinnan Viaduct, as seen in the Harry Potter films, on a train ride from Fort William to Mallaig
- Rail trip from Inverness to Kyle
- Journey on the steam-hauled Strathspey Railway to Aviemore
- West Highland Line rail journey
- Return flights to Edinburgh or Inverness, with coach travel and transfers throughout
- Fully escorted by a friendly, experienced tour manager



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TERMS AND CONDITIONS: *Save up to 15% applies to select tour bookings made by 13 March 2026 and cannot be applied retrospectively to bookings already confirmed. Offer applies to select tours only and cannot be combined with any other offer. Exclusions apply. Prices shown include discount. Single supplements apply. Prices correct at time of print. These holidays are organised and operated by Newmarket Holidays Ltd. ABTOT 5509. ATOL protected 2325. ABTA V7812

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- SATURDAY TRAVEL, GARDENING & FOOD
- SUNDAY TRAVEL, GARDENING & REVIEWS

FASHION GET THE LOOK

Compiled by **GRACE SALMON**

Pyjama party

Upgrade your nighttime routine with stripy sets, gingham prints and oversized collars

Pyjamas £25
NEXT

Jumper and trousers £29.50
F&F

Pyjamas £39.99, jumper £39.99
BOTH RESERVED

Pyjama shirt £29.99, Alice band £14.99, earrings £12.99, rings £7.99
ALL LINDEX

SHOPPING & PETS

32 Shopping
36 Pets
37 TV Guide
42 Horoscopes
45 City
48 Your Letters

Pyjamas £20
GEORGE AT ASDA X ERICA DAVIES

Reader Offer in partnership with Yimbly.com

PORTABLE ENERGY EFFICIENT ELECTRIC HEATER

When colder evenings set in, this electric heater is a simple way to stay warm. Compact and lightweight at just 1.7kg, it can be carried easily from room to room, giving you comfort wherever you need it.

Two fan settings let you choose between gentle warmth at 750W or stronger heat at 1500W. The adjustable thermostat means you can set the temperature to your liking, while quiet operation makes it suitable for bedrooms, living rooms or studies.

The flame effect with four brightness levels adds a gentle ambience, creating the feel of a real fire. Built-in safety features provide added peace of mind. Reliable, safe and easy to use, it keeps any space comfortable and cosy warm throughout the day.

Available in 2 colours:

Black White

- Operation: mains operated
- Heat output: 750w, 1500w
- Power cable length: 1.4m
- Dimensions: H34 x W14 x D18cm

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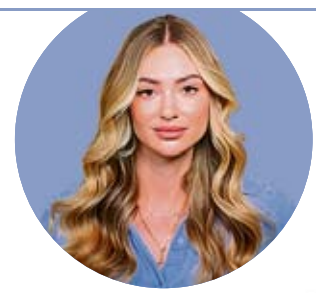
Trustpilot



SHOPPING YOUR NEXT BUY

Edited by **ZOE CRIPPS**

MOST WANTED

DUNE DELIBERATE BAG

It's rare when a high-street handbag gets given cult status thanks to a host of celebrities choosing it over pricey designer brands, but this is precisely what's happened with Dune's Deliberate Large Bag. Priced at £129, it's so far been spotted on the arms of Lily Allen, Bella Hadid and Katie Holmes, proving you don't have to spend a fortune to get a classy carry-all. Shop it in a choice of four colours.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

OUR PLACE THE PERFECT POT, £109

TRIED & TESTED REVIEW

Head of shopping Zoe says: "I love to cook, but I get through pots and pans at an alarming rate. In a bid to see if one could stand the test of time, I put away my cheap supermarket ones in exchange for Our Place's top-rated The Perfect Pot, fromourplace.co.uk. This stove top-to-oven non-stick pot (compatible with induction hobs) features a special ceramic non-stick coating that promises even the stickiest sauces won't cling to it. After a week of use, it's now the only pot I use for boiling, baking and braising. I promise, it's worth spending the money on!"

WHAT'S NEW THIS WEEK

Compiled by **GRACE SALMON**

Orla Changing Robe in Red, £60
REGATTA

Cat Wool Throw, £120 **JJ TEXTILE**

Almond Candle, £42
L'OCCITANE

Recently by Amber Dunes EDP, £5.99
TK MAXX

Cushion covers, £7.99 each
H&M HOME

Caramel Cuddle Body Yogurt, £13
THE BODY SHOP

Non Alcoholic American Malt 700ml, £24
LYRE'S

Ring, £35
16ARLINGTON X M&S

Brown & Blue Checked Tote, £68
OLIVER BONAS

These Are The Good Days print, £34.99
BURNTPEACH.CO.UK

TREND REPORT

Hair glossing

We're all after a low-maintenance hair colour that looks glossy and healthy, but doesn't have us needing to run back to the salon every few weeks for upkeep appointments. Enter home hair glosses, your secret to achieving a professional shine from home.

COLOUR ME HAPPY

Josh Wood Colour Gloss, £20 at Boots

Semi-permanent and lasting up to six washes, this DIY gloss keeps colour fresh from root to tip in between colouring, adding shine as well as a subtle tint. There are seven shades to choose from for all hair colours, with options to add warmth or remove brassiness.

INTO THE LIGHT

Glaze Super Colour Conditioning Gloss, £15.99 at Superdrug

This coats your strands with light-reflecting colour pigments, resulting in a more pigmented colour with a rich tint and high shine. Lasting up to 10 washes, there are eight shades, including one clear gloss that's perfect for giving grey hair its shine back.

TOP 5

WE'VE FOUND THE BEST DEALS ON HANGOVER CURES

Pick up these hangover helpers to perk up your energy levels and skin following the indulgences of party season…

HUMANTRA APRICOT ELECTROLYTES, *£28 for 20 sachets*

One of these sachets delivers six essential electrolytes, alongside key vitamins and minerals to help replenish hydration.

CERAVE SKIN RENEWING EYE CREAM, *£23*

With a potent firming peptide complex, caffeine and hyaluronic acid, this gives life back to tired under-eyes in no time.

NASHI PEAR JUICE, *£19.99 for six cans*

Designed to be enjoyed before a night out, this drink can help your body process alcohol more efficiently and reduce hangover symptoms.

PHIZZ MANGO 3-IN-1 HYDRATION, ELECTROLYTES & VITAMINS, *£8 for 20 tablets*

These are packed with electrolytes and 18 essential nutrients to support daily hydration, boost natural energy and increase overall wellbeing.

PETER THOMAS ROTH PATCH + GO EYE PATCH TRAVEL PACK, *£17 at LookFantastic*

These gel under-eye patches have intense moisturising capabilities and improve the appearance of lacklustre skin and eye bags.

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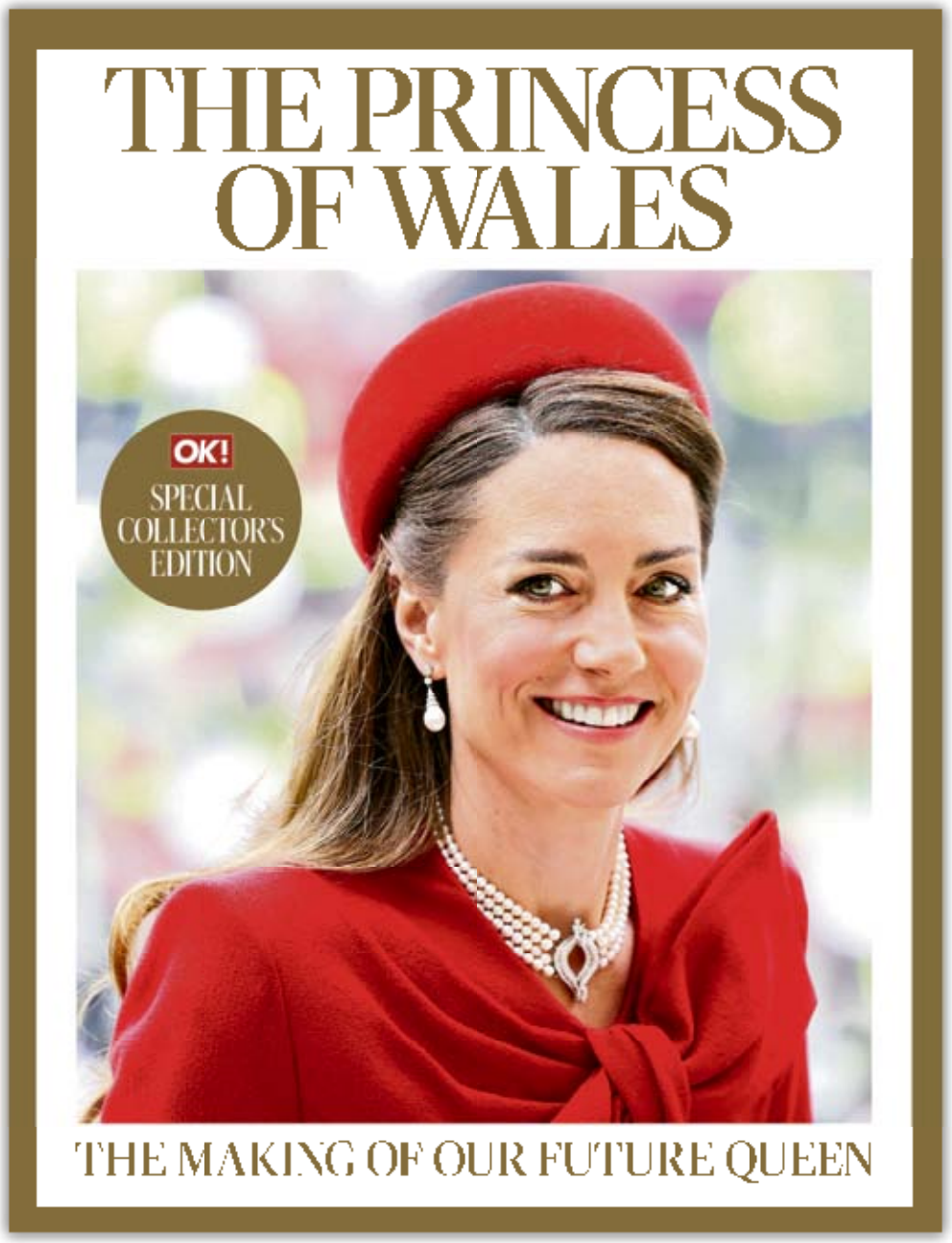

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Online purchase price excludes P&P. See website for details.

LOOK TO THE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 20

It's a heart-led year, and you're playing the long game in love. You begin 2026 in reflective mode, looking back with a smile and thinking, "You know what? I made the right choice". That calm confidence draws people to you like bees to blossom.

Spring sees you glowing, like you've been kissed by Cupid. You're letting go of past patterns and stepping into something deeper, juicier and more exciting. Whether you're falling in love all over again or meeting someone new, there's a cheeky sparkle in your eyes.

Seduction is your secret weapon this year, and passion is never far behind. Prepare to charm, be charmed, and possibly start writing your own love story.

TAURUS APRIL 21-MAY 21

Love might take its sweet time, but when it arrives, oh, how sweet it is! Hold your romantic horses until May. That's when the tide turns and everything you've hoped for starts blooming.

Summer's balmy months bring a steady, glowing warmth to your relationships. There's a real chance to make plans, build something lasting, or simply soak in the joys of being truly seen. For some, love deepens through shared dreams. For others, it might be a new romance that feels oddly familiar in the loveliest way.

By autumn, peace reigns. Your actions are backed by love and understanding, and by the year's end, you'll have woven a gentle, joyful tapestry of connection and contentment.

GEMINI MAY 22-JUNE 21

Love takes a promising twist, and it all begins in spring. March sees you gaining someone's trust, and from there, the heart business gets serious. You're turning a new page, leaving behind old patterns, and finding joy in fresh emotional landscapes.

Summer has "storybook romance" written all over it. You're not just talking about love, you're living it, hand-in-hand with someone who makes you feel grounded and giddy all at once. Projects shared, feelings declared, it's a proper rom-com.

By winter, things slow down, but not in a bad way. The tempo softens, and you start to focus on what really matters: stability, sincerity, and the quiet glow of love that doesn't need a spotlight.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 23

You're glowing! Right from the off, your emotional world is warm, welcoming, and wonderfully alive. Whether single or coupled, you're in the mood for growth, and the universe is in full support mode.

March is dazzling for new connections and exciting plans. You're ambitious, not just in work, but in love too. And come summer? It's all about passion, laughter, and saying yes. Expect romance, spontaneous kisses, and nights that make you feel 17 again.

September may bring a few big questions – you'll go searching for deeper meaning, but by November, all settles. You find peace, clarity, and perhaps even the love you've been craving without realising.

LEO JULY 24-AUGUST 23

February sets the scene for your best love chapter yet. You're beaming, and it shows. New romances spark with ease, while existing bonds get a welcome boost of joy and connection.

Spring delivers major feels. Engagements, big talks, moving in, or just planning ahead together, this is a year for taking things seriously and celebrating every moment.

Leo, you're the star of your own love story, and someone special is watching with hearts in their eyes.

By October, the stars send good news, a romantic message, a fresh beginning, or that final "yes" you've been waiting for. Curtain up – it's time for love to shine!

VIRGO AUGUST 24-SEPTEMBER 23

Get ready to swoon! February and March bring the kind of heart-fluttering magic that only comes when stars align and your schedule allows. You're blissfully happy, possibly head over heels, and more open to love than you've been in ages.

April continues the lucky streak, with joyful surprises and bonding moments galore. But do keep an eye on July, something may feel off, and your usually sharp radar might be clouded by confusion. Take your time and don't leap to conclusions.

From October onwards, the breeze changes, and oh, it smells like romance. Fresh starts, new crushes, and a second chance at something you thought was gone? Anything's possible.

FUTURE WITH RUSSELL GRANT

What's in store for love in 2026?

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 24-OCTOBER 23

Love is off to a flying start this year. Your heart's full, your mind's open, and everything feels light, breezy and beautifully balanced. New relationships blossom like roses in spring, while old ones deepen with grace and tenderness.

You're making bold choices: where to love, who to love, and how much to give. And guess what? Your instincts are spot-on. Romance is on a roll, and there's room for growth, adventure, and a few delicious surprises.

After summer, things may wobble slightly. A miscommunication here, a touch of distance there, but nothing you can't sort with a cuppa and a heart-to-heart. Come autumn, it's all harmony again.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 24-NOVEMBER 22

Scorpio, your love life starts with a few bumps, but don't lose heart. Around March, things may feel uncertain, and emotional roadblocks might delay plans. You're not being punished… just redirected.

From May, the mood shifts. The clouds part, confidence returns, and suddenly, you're back in your element: bold, magnetic and ready for something real. Words are spoken, promises are made and love begins to feel like home again.

The summer's got some serious sizzle – plenty of passion, flirty fun and deep connections. Come November, all the dust has settled and what's left is solid, stable and gorgeous.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 23-DECEMBER 21

You're owning your feelings this year, Sagittarius – but not in a heavy way. Small emotional hiccups pop up early on, but they help you see what really matters. You're learning to follow your heart, even if others don't always understand your choices.

By summer, your soul lights up. Romance blooms, energy returns, and you feel free to love fully, wildly and wonderfully. Someone new may come into your life, or a current flame might reignite in surprising ways.

End-of-year love is generous and full of kindness. Whether you're giving it, receiving it, or simply feeling it all around, you'll end the year with your heart warm and your smile wide.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 20

You're not messing about this year, Capricorn. Love gets serious, but in the best way. You're clearer than ever on what (and who) you want, and you're ready to build something lasting.

May is a scorcher, romantically speaking. You're radiating confidence, charm and a little bit of mystery. Whether single or spoken for, you're letting love lead the way. Expect meaningful chats, spontaneous dates, and possibly a whirlwind romance that sweeps you off your feet.

After summer, emotions take a nostalgic turn. Old flames, familiar places, or forgotten memories might resurface – but fear not. They pass like clouds, leaving you lighter and wiser.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 21-FEBRUARY 19

It's a year of subtle shifts and a surprising opening of the heart. The first few months are about adjustments. If you're coupled up, you're fine-tuning your rhythm. Single? You're starting to realise exactly what you want (and what you absolutely don't).

Between May and June, love comes calling, likely when you least expect it. A glance, a message, a meeting that feels strangely fated. Say yes to what feels right, even if it's unfamiliar.

September wraps you in comfort. Emotional stability, sweet words, and someone who makes you feel safe and seen. By November, you're ready to rest, reset and recharge – preferably with a cuddle and a cuppa.

PISCES FEBRUARY 20-MARCH 20

This year brings love with a twist, and what a magical twist it is! Just as summer rolls in, something shifts. You're swept off your feet in a way that surprises even your romantic soul. Whether single or attached, the vibes are deliciously dreamy.

You and your partner may build something truly meaningful – or if you're solo, someone arrives who just gets you. Your faith in love is rewarded tenfold.

By September and October, you're grounding all that heart-fluttery goodness into something real. Security, stability, and shared visions for the future – how lovely. Your love life glows with some gentle confidence.

PAMPERED PETS

Our vet **DAVID GRANT** *works his magic*

Jumpy over cat's fleas

Q I found a flea on my cat and have treated her with a pet shop spot-on. I also have two three-year-old rabbits. Can they be infested with fleas and if so, what is the best treatment? Could I use the same treatment as the one for my cat?

A Whether your rabbits can catch fleas from your cats depends on the shared living arrangements. If the rabbits are house rabbits and can move about on carpets and other cat resting places, flea infestation is highly likely.

I can explain this by a short summary of some aspects of the flea life-cycle.

Fleas found on cats are invariably Ctenocephalides felis, which is an extraordinarily successful flea. The female lays around 50 eggs per day and unsurprisingly it doesn't take long for a sizeable infestation to build up in the environment – carpets, cat beds and the like.

'Can my rabbits also get infested?'

The eggs hatch into larvae and then pupae over two to three weeks. The pupae do not hatch into adult fleas immediately, as they need to know a suitable host is nearby for a meal. The trigger factors for hatching are warmth, carbon dioxide from breath, and vibration such as footfall.

These triggers produce instantaneous hatching and jumping, measured in a Scientific American article in the 70s at around eight inches. High enough to reach your ankles and any rabbit or other pet, and the fleas are not fussy where they get their first meal.

Rabbits require licensed, veterinary prescribed products only for treatment, as cat products can cause severe toxicity and even death.

Q My four-year-old male neutered cat has developed lots of little scabs along his back. I first noticed them quite recently when stroking him, as they are not obviously visible. Can you advise what this is likely to be?

A These small crusty bumps you can feel are very suggestive of a condition called miliary dermatitis. This is a description rather than a diagnosis.

Miliary comes from the Latin for millet seed, as the little scabs look like seeds. The number one cause of miliary dermatitis by far is allergy to fleas, difficult to believe if, as is often the case, an owner has never seen fleas on the cat.

Nevertheless, a good flea control programme is where vets will usually start in an intention to cure treatment programme.

There are other less common causes of miliary dermatitis. These are various parasitic mites, for example the ear mite, allergy to food, environmental allergies such as pollens and house dust mites, and bacterial or fungal infections.

A fascinating, unique feature of cats, is that miliary dermatitis is just one way they may react to the same causes, described as a cutaneous reaction pattern.

Others are bald patches, usually symmetrical, thickened inflamed lesions (granulomas), and itchiness round the head and neck, a common feature of food allergy.

Whatever the underlying cause, an inflammatory reaction is usually present.

There are anti-inflammatory drugs that will clear the lesions in the short term, keeping a cat happy. This allows a step-by-step investigation of the causes aiming for a cure.

David Grant has been a vet for more than 50 years. Email questions to him at pamperedpets@reachplc.co.uk. He cannot enter into individual correspondence.

DOG & BAY DOG TOWEL
£29, Oliver Bonas

BONE DOG SOFT TOY
£1.99, TK Maxx

CAT TREATS
£2.29, TK Maxx

INDOOR OUTDOOR SYBIL PETBED
£195, Cox&Cox

LUXURY LEATHER WHITE AND BROWN SPOTTED DOG COLLAR
£35, Snugbums

PREPARE FOR NEW YEAR

With calming beds to soothe fireworks anxiety, tasty treats to start the year healthier, and shampoo to get them party ready, this week we're getting our furry friends ready to embrace a brand new year.

Compiled by **FAITH RICHARDSON**

CHAMPAGNE DOG TOY
£15, Sophie Allport

DOG SHAMPOO
£3.99, Homesense

FLUFFY ROUND CALMING PET BED
£14, Online Home Shop

TODAY'S TV ONES TO WATCH

By **MIKE WARD**, *TV Critic*

Pick of the day

DIY SOS: GLADIATORS SPECIAL, BBC1, 8PM

GLADIATORS... READY! *Nick Knowles, Jodie Ounsley and Tom Wilson*

PROJECT NEEDS SOME EXTRA MUSCLE

IS IT just my imagination, or are Gladiators popping up all over the place? Ones from the TV series, I mean, not from ancient Rome. We've had a Gladiator on Strictly. We had a Gladiator on Celebrity MasterChef. We've had a Gladiator on Sewing Bee. We've had Gladiators (several) on The Wheel. We currently have a Gladiator on Celebrity Apprentice. No doubt we've had Gladiators on Question Time, Songs of Praise and Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg, only on episodes I forgot to tune in for.

I'm sure it wasn't this way with the original lot. I'm sure the Nineties bunch just turned up on a Saturday night, did a bit of gladiating, then went back to the gym for the week to pump some more irons, or whatever it is these people do. I don't recall Wolf ever doing Countdown, say, or Gardeners' World.

Tonight, as you see, we even have this Gladiators special of DIY SOS, where four of the current bunch – namely, Cyclone, Giant , Fury and Hammer (who together sound like an alternative shipping forecast) – turn up to lend a hand with a building project in Beverley, East Yorkshire.

The task is to build the local kids their own youth club, something they've sorely missed for several years. When Covid struck, the community centre where they'd previously met was turned into a food hub, a role it's been playing ever since.

Together with volunteers and tradespeople from the area, they must build this new place in just nine days. (Or else what? Who knows?)

So, yes, it's very much the sort of thing we've come to expect nowadays from presenter Nick Knowles and his merry band, a wonderful job on behalf of a wonderful cause.

Compare that to this show's very earliest days, when each week they'd have to visit the home of a family who'd suffered a DIY disaster essentially of their own making – people who'd assumed, for example, that fitting their own kitchen would be a piece of cake but who'd ended up making a right pig's ear of it.

How they kept their manners back then, heaven only knows.

If I were Nick, I'd have turned up, taken one look at it and gone: "You're an idiot, mate. Fix it yourself."

I still think that would make a fine name for a show.

KEN DODD: THE LOST TAPES, 5, 9PM

THERE'LL never be another Ken Dodd. Doddy's style was unique, as was his look, and he only got funnier with age. His widow Lady Anne, watching some of this fabulous footage for the first time, recalls how she urged him to trim some of his famously long shows, for the good of his health: "But he still performed at 90, so who am I to say?"

The clips feature many a gag on that theme, such as one where his stage show is nearing the half-way mark. "No, you can't go yet, missus," he tells a lady in the audience. "There's another half to go. This is like antibiotics. You have to finish the course."

MIDSOMER MURDERS, ITV1, 8.30PM

THIS sounds like a plot they've used before, the victim being the author of a book that triggered a nationwide treasure hunt, and the suspects including several of its most obsessive fans. But it can't be, because Midsomer Murders' legion of global superfans would spot that at once. According to ITV, the series is the biggest UK detective drama export for years, and a top-three show in nearly 200 territories.

It's also one "whose repeatable loyalty factor enables us to position the series on various platforms, from PSBs to AVOD and FAST." If you've the faintest idea what that means, do let me know.

BEST FILM

ROCKETMAN, CHANNEL 4, 9PM

Biographical musical drama of Elton John's life starring Taron Egerton and Jamie Bell, telling the highs and lows of an action-packed career.

BEST DOC

TITANIC SINKS TONIGHT, BBC2, 9PM

As the ship goes down fast, there's a scramble for places in the remaining lifeboats. To maintain order, officers resort to desperate measures.

BEST TRIBUTE

GEOFF CAPES: BRITAIN'S GREATEST STRONGMAN, 5, 8PM

A celebration of the life of one of Britain's greatest athletes. Through memories of friends and family, this portrait charts Geoff's rise to fame.

BEST SPORT

MATCH OF THE DAY, BBC1, 10.30PM

Highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Arsenal v Aston Villa and Manchester United v Wolverhampton Wanderers.

TODAY'S PREVIEWS ARE ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE

FILM RATINGS
★★★★★ BRILLIANT
★★★★ VERY GOOD
★★★ GOOD
★★ AVERAGE
★ BAD

(R) REPEAT

ALL PROGRAMMES ARE LISTED IN GREENWICH MEAN TIME (GMT).

BBC One

6.00am Breakfast News headlines.
9.00 Tabby McTat Animation. (R)
9.25 FILM The Croods 2: A New Age (2020, U) Animated comedy sequel. ★★★★
10.55 Celebrity Homes Under the Hammer (R)
12.00noon Bargain Hunt (R)
12.45 BBC News at One; Weather
1.10 FILM Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile (2022, PG) Musical comedy, with Javier Bardem. ★★★★
2.50 FILM Back to the Future Part II (1989, PG) Teenager Marty McFly travels into the future. Sci-fi comedy sequel, starring Michael J Fox and Christopher Lloyd. ★★★
4.30 Celebrity Bridge of Lies: Pop Special With Sinitta, Ian 'H' Watkins, Ritchie Neville and Una Healy. (R)
5.15 Pointless Celebrities Mark Stacey, Catherine Southon, Kye Whyte, Dan Powell, Anjli Mohindra, Meera Syal, Rosie Jones and Suzi Ruffell take part in the quiz show. (R)
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.20 Regional News; Weather

BBC Two

6.00am Celebrity Escape to the Country Angellica Bell. (R)
7.00 Richard Osman's Festive House of Games (R)
8.00 Sign Zone: Sir Anthony Hopkins: A Career in Character A profile. (R)
8.25 Sign Zone: Sundar Pichai: Running the Google Empire (R)
8.55 The Best Dishes Ever (R)
9.25 FILM The Man Who Knew Too Much (1956, PG) Thriller, with James Stewart. ★★★★
11.25 FILM The Third Man (1949, PG) Thriller, with Joseph Cotten and Orson Welles. ★★★★★
1.05pm Escape to the Country (R)
1.50 Alfred Hitchcock: Talking Pictures TV appearances. (R)
2.30 FILM Dial M for Murder (1954, PG) Alfred Hitchcock's thriller, starring Ray Milland and Grace Kelly. ★★★★
4.10 FILM Rear Window (1954, PG) Thriller, with James Stewart and Grace Kelly. ★★★★★
6.00 Hercules the Bear – A Love Story A Scottish couple who raised a grizzly bear.

ITV1

6.00am Good Morning Britain A lively mix of news, current affairs and lifestyle features.
9.00 James Martin's Saturday Morning James is joined by Gavin & Stacey star Joanna Page, master mixologist Merlin Griffiths, and chefs Francesco Mazzei and Jude Kereama. (R)
11.10 James Martin's Midweek Menu A lobster thermidor. (R)
12.10pm FILM Grease (1978, PG) A rebellious teenager falls for a shy Australian girl – but risks losing her by trying to act cool. Romantic musical set in the 1950s, with John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John. ★★★★★
2.25 ITV News; Weather
2.35 Regional News; Weather
2.40 FILM E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial (1982, U) A lonely boy befriends a stranded alien. Steven Spielberg's sci-fi, starring Henry Thomas and Drew Barrymore. ★★★★★
5.00 Tipping Point: Lucky Stars With Tony Blackburn, Tim Vine and Megan McKenna. (R)
6.00 The Chase Quiz show, hosted by Bradley Walsh. (R)

Channel 4

6.15am Cheers Triple bill. (R)
7.35 Everybody Loves Raymond Triple bill of the comedy. (R)
9.00 Frasier Double bill. (R)
10.00 Junior Bake Off Revisiting the second week from series nine as eight more bakers showcase their talents. (R)
11.30 A Place in the Sun Jasmine Harman helps house-hunters Jesica and Karl find a holiday home in Cadiz, southern Spain with a budget of £95,000. (R)
12.35pm Channel 4 News Summary Headlines.
12.40 Chateau DIY at Christmas Nick and Nicole race to finish their grand dining room. (R)
1.40 Britain's Extreme Weather 2024 Looking back at 2024's extreme weather events. (R)
2.40 Four in a Bed Five episodes. Starting at Lodge Duxford in Cambridgeshire; at Emerald Stays in Stratford-upon-Avon; at The Barn in North Yorkshire; the final visit is to Dilham Hall Retreats in Norfolk; Payment Day arrives for the owners. (R)
5.10 Channel 4 News

5

6.00am Milkshake! Children's TV.
9.10 FILM Miss Potter (2006, PG) Biographical period drama, starring Renee Zellweger and Ewan McGregor. ★★★
11.00 FILM The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel (2011, 12) Seven English pensioners decide to make a fresh start by moving to India to live in a dilapidated hotel. Comedy drama, starring Judi Dench, Bill Nighy, Maggie Smith and Dev Patel. ★★★★
1.20pm FILM The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel (2015, PG) Retirement home owner Sonny sets out to expand his empire. Comedy drama sequel, with Dev Patel and Maggie Smith. ★★★
3.45 FILM Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End (2007, 12) The swashbuckling rogues join forces with old foe Barbossa to rescue Captain Jack Sparrow from the land of the dead. Fantasy sequel, with Johnny Depp, Geoffrey Rush and Orlando Bloom. ★★★★; 5 News Update

6.30pm, CELEBRITY ESCAPE TO THE...: Chesney Hawkes

10pm, LIVE AT THE APOLLO: Josh Pugh, Mo Gilligan & Laura Smyth

8.30pm, MIDSOMER MURDERS: Omid Djalili (left)

9pm, ROCKETMAN: Taron Egerton

9pm, KEN DODD: THE LOST TAPES: Ken Dodd

7

6.30 Celebrity Escape to the Country With singer and actor Chesney Hawkes.
7.30 EastEnders A situation escalates at Jimmy's christening, Kojo attempts to help a friend, and the drama of Christmas is far from over.

7.00 Richard Osman's Festive House of Games With Alex Brooker, Rhys Darby, Joanna Page and Molly Rainford.
7.30 Celebrity Mastermind Iwan Thomas, Sophie Aldred, Mobeen Azhar and Ashley James answer questions.

7.00 ITV Evening News; Weather
7.10 Regional News; Weather
7.30 Emmerdale April wants to create an escape plan, but it remains to be seen if it will work, while wedding plans are mooted and the threat to life is imminent.

5.40 FILM Hidden Figures (2016, PG) Female African-American mathematicians overcome prejudice as they work on the US space programme. Fact-based drama, starring Taraji P Henson, Octavia Spencer and Janelle Monae. ★★★★

7.00 World's Strongest Man 2025 Action from heat four at California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento. Presented by James Richardson, Eddie Hall and Michelle Ackerley, with commentary; 5 News Update

8

8.00 DIY SOS: Gladiators Special Nick Knowles and the team build a new youth centre for the children of Beverley, East Yorkshire, whose old building was converted into a food hub for families during the pandemic.

8.00 Only Connect: Law Special In this edition, the law is in the spotlight, with the Cartophiles taking on the Harmonics.
8.30 Christmas University Challenge In the final heat, champions from Middlesex face a Lancaster team.

8.00 Coronation Street When Abi confides in her about the state of her relationship with Carl, Tracy urges her to take drastic action.
8.30 Midsomer Murders When the author of a book that sparked a nationwide treasure hunt is found dead, Barnaby and Winter must unravel the cryptic clues to find the killer among a group of dedicated seekers. Detective drama, starring Neil Dudgeon, Nick Hendrix and Fiona Dolman. Omid Djalili, Shaun Dooley and Sally Lindsay guest star.

8.00 Alpine Train at Christmas A festive ride on the illustrious Bernina Express, one of the most picturesque trains in the world, beginning in Chur, the oldest town in Switzerland, and travelling through to the town of Tirano in Italy. (R)

8.00 Geoff Capes: Britain's Greatest Strongman Through memories from competitors, friends and family, this portrait follows Geoff Capes's rise from a Lincolnshire farm to fame as one of the UK's best athletes.

9

9.00 The Celebrity Apprentice: Christmas Special Part two of two. After a festive trip to Lapland, the celebrities head back to London to pitch their biscuits to supermarket giants and retailers, and both teams rope in their famous friends.

9.00 Titanic Sinks Tonight The Titanic goes down fast in the early hours, with over 2,000 people still on board. In the face of a scramble to get in the remaining lifeboats, guns are handed out to the senior officers to maintain order.

9.00 FILM Rocketman (2019, 15) Elton John enters an addiction rehabilitation session, and recounts his life in a flashback, covering his days as young Reginald Dwight growing up in 1950s Britain. He takes piano lessons, makes his way into the Royal Academy of Music, and hones his craft in local pubs before becoming one of the world's biggest pop stars. Golden Globe-winning biopic, starring Taron Egerton, Jamie Bell, Richard Madden, Bryce Dallas Howard and Steven Mackintosh. ★★★★

9.00 Ken Dodd: The Lost Tapes Recently discovered footage of comedian and actor Sir Ken Dodd performing on stage at the very peak of his powers. This programme also features some of Ken's finest work on television, including an early encounter with The Beatles.

10

10.00 BBC News at Ten
10.20 Regional News; Weather
10.30 Match of the Day Highlights of the latest Premier League matches, with Arsenal v Aston Villa and Manchester United v Wolverhampton Wanderers. Plus, Burnley v Newcastle United, Nottingham Forest v Everton, West Ham United v Brighton & Hove Albion, and Chelsea v Bournemouth.

10.00 Live at the Apollo Mo Gilligan introduces fellow comedians Laura Smyth and Josh Pugh.
10.45 The Cockfields Christmas Special Simon and Esther travel to the Isle of Wight at Christmas to visit his family. Comedy, with Joe Wilkinson.

10.30 ITV News; Weather
10.45 FILM Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom (1984, 12) The intrepid archaeologist, with his young sidekick and a nightclub singer in tow, is stranded in India, where he takes on a mission to recover magical sacred stones from the hands of an evil cult engaged in human sacrifice and child slavery. Steven Spielberg's action adventure, starring Harrison Ford, Kate Capshaw, Ke Huy Quan, Amrish Puri, Philip Stone and Dan Aykroyd. ★★★★

10.30 FILM Armageddon (1998, PG) Nasa discovers an asteroid the size of Texas is on a collision course with Earth, so a drilling expert is recruited to train a team of misfits to transport a nuclear device into outer space to destroy it – but having had no experience of space travel, the reluctant astronauts find themselves out of their depth. Sci-fi thriller, with Bruce Willis, Ben Affleck, Liv Tyler, Michael Clarke Duncan, Billy Bob Thornton and Steve Buscemi. ★★★★

11

11.45 Two Doors Down Christmas Special Eric and Beth put their tree up earlier than usual. Starring Arabella Weir. (R)

11.30 FILM The Godfather: Part III (1990, 15) Ageing Mafia don Michael Corleone is haunted by past crimes as he tries to legitimise his family business. Crime drama sequel, starring Al Pacino, Andy Garcia and Diane Keaton. ★★★★

11.20 Bill Bailey Live: Part Troll The star of Black Books and Never Mind the Buzzcocks delivers a stand-up comedy performance at Hammersmith Apollo as part of his 2004 tour, which played to packed houses all over the UK. (R)

12 MIDNIGHT

12.15am Mrs Brown's Boys Christmas Special. The doting matriarch rediscovers the meaning of family as she gathers those closest to her for a seasonal photo. Cathy frets about what to buy everyone for Christmas. (R) **12.45** Weather for the Week Ahead **12.50-6.00am** BBC News

2.00am FILM Sign Zone: Puss In Boots: The Last Wish (2022, PG) ★★★★★ **3.35** Sign Zone: A Ghost Story for Christmas: The Room in the Tower (R) **4.05** Sign Zone: MasterChef Festive Extravaganza: Champion of Champions (R) **5.05-6.35am** This Is BBC Two

12.50am Shop on TV **3.00** Torvill & Dean: The Last Dance. Following the pair as they embark on their final tour. (R) **3.50** Unwind with ITV **5.05-6.00am** Wheel of Fortune Christmas Special. Graham Norton hosts a festive edition of the show, with Craig and Erin, Sue and Kaye, and Sheesh and Suki. (R)

12.50am The Festive Pottery Throw Down 2025 (R) **1.55 FILM** Pet Sematary (2019, 15) Horror. ★★★ **3.35** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (R) **4.25** Handmade: Britain's Best Woodworker (R) **5.20** Kirstie's House of Craft (R) **5.40-6.35am** Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It (R)

1.20am PlayOJO Live Casino Show **3.20 FILM** A New Year's Resolution (2019, PG) Premiere. Drama, starring Aimee Teegarden and Michael Rady. ★★ **4.45** Friends: double bill (R) **5.30** Entertainment News on 5 **5.35** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom (R) **5.45-6.00am** Milo (R)

ITV2 FREEVIEW 6

6.00am CITV **7.45** Dress to Impress **8.40** Celebrity Dinner Date **10.40** Celebrity Wheel of Fortune **11.40** Deal or No Deal: Celebrity Special **12.45pm** Celebrity Catchphrase **1.40** FILM Ella Enchanted (2004, PG) Fantasy adventure, starring Anne Hathaway. ★★★ **3.35** FILM Ice Age: Continental Drift (2012, U) Animated comedy sequel, with the voice of Ray Romano. ★★★ **5.20** FILM Shrek Forever After (2010, U) Animated comedy, featuring the voice of Mike Myers. ★★★

7.10 FILM **Johnny English** (2003, PG) Spy comedy, starring Rowan Atkinson, John Malkovich and Natalie Imbruglia. ★★★★

9.00 FILM **Fast & Furious 9** (2021, 12) Action sequel, starring Vin Diesel. ★★★

11.45 Family Guy Peter joins the Tea Party and shuts down the government.

12.15am Family Guy **12.45** American Dad! **1.45** Deep Fake Neighbour Wars **2.10** Deal or No Deal: Celebrity Special **3.10** Secret Crush **4.55-6.00am** Unwind

ITVQuiz FREEVIEW 28

9.00am Lingo **10.00** Tenable **11.00** Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? Celebrity Special **12.00noon** Beat the Chasers **1.00** Ant & Dec's Limitless Win **2.00** Tipping Point **3.00** Tenable **4.00** Bullseye **5.05** Wheel of Fortune

6.05 Lingo Word game, hosted by Adil Ray.

7.05 Ant & Dec's Limitless Win NHS matrons Karis and Tim play the game.

8.05 Bullseye With guest Stephen Bunting.

9.05 Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? Celebrity Special Steph McGovern and Dion Dublin compete to win for charity.

10.05 Beat the Chasers The Beast, The Governess, The Vixen, The Sinnerman, The Dark Destroyer and The Menace... can anyone Beat the Chasers?

11.10 Tipping Point Ben Shephard hosts the quiz show in which four players take on an extraordinary machine in the hope of winning the £10,000 jackpot.

12.00m't Bullseye **1.00** Wheel of Fortune **1.55** Unwind **2.00-9.00am** Teleshopping

BBC3 FREEVIEW 23

7.00pm The Catch Up News.

7.05 FILM **Paddington** (2014, PG) Family comedy, with the voice of Ben Whishaw. ★★★★★

8.30 FILM **Paddington 2** (2017, PG) Comedy, starring Hugh Bonneville, Hugh Grant and Sally Hawkins, with the voice of Ben Whishaw. ★★★★★

10.05 Motherland Christmas Special 2020 Julia, Kevin and Liz crash Amanda's annual soiree.

10.35 Motherland Christmas Special 2022 The mothers – and Kevin – try to enjoy Christmas with their family and friends.

11.10 Amandaland Christmas Special The family heads to Aunt Joan's country house for Christmas.

11.45 FILM **Four Weddings and a Funeral** (1994, 15) Romantic comedy, with Hugh Grant. ★★★★

1.35am Calamity James **1.50-3.55am** Gavin & Stacey: four episodes

BBC4 FREEVIEW 9

7.00pm Royal Institution Christmas Lectures: Is There Life Beyond Earth? Last in series.

8.00 The Best of Seven Worlds, One Planet A compilation of best bits.

9.00 John le Carre: The Secret Centre A look at the author and MI5 officer's clandestine career.

10.00 Michael Jayston Remembers – Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy The actor reflects on the 1979 drama.

10.10 Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy Double bill. Classic spy thriller, with Alec Guinness. Smiley interrupts his retirement from the secret service; Smiley covers some old ground.

11.50 Mark Lawson Talks to John le Carre The author discusses his life.

12.50am John le Carre: The Secret Centre **1.50** Blue Planet II: Oceans of Wonder **2.50-3.50am** Royal Institution Christmas Lectures: Is There Life Beyond Earth?

GB News FREEVIEW 236

6.00am Breakfast with Eamonn and Ellie **9.30** Britain's Newsroom **12.00noon** Good Afternoon Britain **3.00** Martin Daubney. Updates.

6.00 Dewbs & Co Plain-speaking, straight-talking – Michelle Dewberry delivers her take on the day's news.

7.00 Farage An action-packed hour of topical discussion and debate.

8.00 Jacob Rees-Mogg's State Of The Nation Join Jacob for his unique and unmissable take on the news.

9.00 Patrick Christys Tonight The latest topical discussion and debate.

11.00 Patrick Christys Tonight Late Edition Tomorrow's news, tonight. All the major stories making the front pages and full coverage of all the breaking news at home and abroad.

12.00m't The Late Show Live **2.00** Farage Replay **3.00** Patrick Christys Tonight Replay **5.00-6.00am** Patrick Christys Tonight Late Edition

U&Dave FREEVIEW 19

7.25am Top Gear: Burma Special **10.00** Guy Martin: Proper Jobs **11.00** Red Bull Soapbox Race 2022 **12.00noon** Red Bull Soapbox Race **1.00** Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing **3.00** Top Gear Winter Olympics Special **4.00** Top Gear Vietnam Special **5.40** QI

6.20 QI With Bill Bailey, Katy Brand and Eshaan Akbar joining Alan Davies.

7.00 Would I Lie to You? Double bill.

8.20 Would I Lie to You? – The Unseen Bits A compilation of unseen material.

9.00 QI XL Sandi Toksvig hosts an underground and underwater episode.

10.00 Have I Got a Bit More News for You Alexander Armstrong hosts.

11.00 Would I Lie to You? Double bill.

12.20am Mock the Week **1.40** Would I Lie to You? **2.15** Travel Man: 48 Hours in Athens **2.40** Travel Man: 48 Hours in Porto **3.10** Travel Man: 48 Hours in Tallinn **3.35** Travel Man: 48 Hours in Hamburg **4.00-6.00am** Teleshopping

U&Drama FREEVIEW 20

6.00am Teleshopping **7.05** Birds of a Feather **7.50** Doctors **9.00** Classic Holby City **10.00** Classic Casualty **11.10** The Bill **12.15pm** Classic EastEnders **1.35** Miss Marple **3.40** Bergerac

6.00 Last of the Summer Wine Triple bill.

8.00 Harry Wild Harry, Lola and Fergus are invited to a weekend-long 1920s themed murder mystery party at a hotel on a secluded island, but before they arrive, a real murder takes place.

9.00 Whitstable Pearl Restaurant owner Pearl Nolan sets up a detective agency after undergoing police training in an earlier career. The first episode of the crime drama, starring Kerry Godliman.

10.05 New Tricks Sandra reopens the investigation into an apparent suicide.

11.25 Waking the Dead Part one of two. Spencer is suspected of destroying evidence when a case is re-examined.

12.40am Hotel Portofino **1.55** A Small Light **3.00-4.00am** Darby and Joan

E4 FREEVIEW 13

6.00am Hollyoaks **6.55** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **7.00** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **9.00** The Goldbergs **10.00** The Simpsons **11.30** Top 30: Big Bang Theory: thirteen episodes

6.00pm Top 30: Big Bang Theory

7.00 Hollyoaks Leela strives to give her children and Lucas the best day she can.

7.30 The Simpsons Triple bill. Homer wins a role on The Itchy & Scratchy Show; Lisa babysits Bart; alcohol is outlawed.

9.00 Celebrity Gogglebox 2020 A chance to catch-up with some of the best moments from 2020's episodes.

10.00 Gogglebox Opinions on Britain's Got Talent and Scared of the Dark.

11.05 First Dates An American-born magazine editor meets a storyteller.

12.10am Naked Attraction. Hosted by Anna Richardson. **1.15** The Inbetweeners **2.20** Celebrity Gogglebox 2020 **3.15** First Dates **4.05** The Goldbergs **4.55-6.00am** Don't Tell the Bride

More4 FREEVIEW 18

8.55am A Place in the Sun **9.55** Find It, Fix It, Flog It **12.00noon** Four in a Bed: five episodes **2.40** A Place in the Sun **4.15** Come Dine with Me: five episodes

6.55 Grand Designs Double bill. Restoring a neo-Gothic cemetery keeper's lodge in south-west London; a couple plan to build a new family home in rural East Sussex almost entirely out of concrete.

9.00 24 Hours in Police Custody Feature-length special about an investigation into a case of possible rape involving a man who arranges to meet multiple men a week for sex using a dating app.

10.35 24 Hours in A&E Double bill. Consultant Will is concerned about potential spinal and head injuries when a 63-year-old woman is rushed in after falling from a horse; a 53-year-old has suffered a suspected heart attack.

12.40am 999: On the Front Line **1.45** 24 Hours in Police Custody **3.20-3.45am** Food Unwrapped's Nordic Adventure

Variations & S4C

WALES As BBC1 except: 1.00-1.10pm BBC Wales Today; Weather **6.20-6.30** BBC Wales Today; Weather **10.20-10.30** BBC Wales Today; Weather **11.45pm-12.15am** Rewind: 60 Years of Welsh Pop – Christmas Crackers. The ultimate Welsh Christmas playlist.

WALES As BBC2 except: 6.00-7.00pm The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe: The Read with Steffan Rhodri. The actor reads the classic.

MERIDIAN As ITV1 except: 2.35-2.40pm ITV News Meridian. The latest headlines; Weather **7.10-7.30pm** ITV News Meridian; Weather

CENTRAL As ITV1 except: 2.35-2.40pm ITV News Central. The latest headlines; Weather **7.10-7.30pm** ITV News Central; Weather

ITV WALES As ITV1 except: 2.35-2.40pm ITV News Cymru Wales. Latest headlines; Weather **7.10-7.30pm** ITV News Wales at Six; Weather

WEST As ITV1 except: 2.35-2.40pm ITV News West Country. The latest headlines; Weather **7.10-7.30pm** ITV News West Country; Weather

ANGLIA As ITV1 except: 2.35-2.40pm ITV News Anglia. The latest headlines; Weather **7.10-7.30pm** ITV News Anglia; Weather

WESTCOUNTRY As ITV1 except: 2.35-2.40pm ITV News West Country; Weather **7.10-7.30pm** ITV News West Country; Weather

S4C 6.00am Cyw **12.00noon** Sgwrs Dan y Lloer **12.30pm** Newyddion y Flwyddyn 2025 **1.15** Stuart Burrows: Brenin y Tenoriaid **2.00** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **2.05** Iolo: Natur Bregus Cymru **3.00** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **3.05** Cefn Gwlad **4.00** Awr Fawr **5.00** Stwnsh **6.15** Sgorio. Action from recent matches. **6.45** Priodas Pum Mil. Friends plan a wedding for a couple engaged for 13 years. **7.45** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **8.00** Pobol y Cwm. Ffion and Cai make a disturbing discovery that changes everything and Colin struggles to understand Gaynor's behaviour. **8.25** Rownd a Rownd. Iestyn regrets kissing Britney at the wedding and misses Elliw. After coming together to arrange a surprise for Mel, Ken and Kay seem to be communicating better. **8.55** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **9.00** Geraint Thomas: y Daith. A look back at the cyclist's time in the saddle. **10.00** Clwb Rygbi: Super Rygbi Cymru. Action from the latest round of fixtures. **10.30-11.35pm** Guinness World Records Cymru 2025. Record-breaking attempts from across Wales.

CELEBRATING 200 YEARS OF BRITISH RAILWAYS

THE LONGEST ROMANCE IN THE HISTORY OF TRAVEL

'Puffer nutter' Paul's ode to trains is a must-read for any railway fan

Foreword by Pete Waterman

ON SALE IN ALL GOOD BOOKSHOPS AND AMAZON

AMAZON

Sport

SKY SPORTS MAIN EVENT

6.00am Sky Sports News **7.00** Sky Sports Breakfast **8.00** The Best of the Big Bash League **8.10** LIVE **Big Bash League** Sydney Thunder v Perth Scorchers. Coverage from ENGIE Stadium. **11.30** Sky Sports FC **12.00noon** Lunchtime Live **12.30** LIVE **World Darts Championship** Coverage of the afternoon session on day 17. **4.30** Sports Desk **5.00** The Premier League Show **6.30** LIVE **Premier League** Chelsea v Bournemouth (kick-off 7.30pm). **11.00** A League of Their Own. Comedy sports quiz. **12.00m't** Sky Sports News. Headlines. **12.30** LIVE **NBA Basketball** Memphis Grizzlies v Philadelphia 76ers (Tip-off 1.00am). **3.30-6.00am** LIVE **NBA Basketball** Los Angeles Lakers v Detroit Pistons (Tip-off 3.30am).

SKY SPORTS CRICKET

6.00am Big Bash League **7.00** Best of J Anderson: 500th Wicket **7.10** Big Bash League **8.10** LIVE **Big Bash League** Sydney Thunder v Perth Scorchers. Coverage at ENGIE Stadium. **11.30** Best of England v South Africa **11.45** Best of ICC WT20 **12.00noon** Big Bash League **2.00** Best of England v South Africa **2.15** Best of J Anderson: 500th Wicket **2.25** LIVE **ILT20** The qualifier 1 play-off match. **5.45** Best of England v South Africa **6.00** Best of England v New Zealand **6.15** Best of ICC WT20 **6.30** LIVE **Premier League** Nottingham Forest v Everton (kick-off 7.30pm). Coverage of the top-flight match at The City Ground. **11.00** SA20 **12.00m't** Big Bash League **4.20** Best of J Anderson: 500th Wicket **4.30** Best of England v South Africa **4.45** Best of England v New Zealand **5.00-6.00am** Big Bash League

SKY SPORTS FOOTBALL

6.00am EFL **9.00** EFL Greatest Games **10.00** Championship Retro **12.00noon** Bundesliga Special: Midseason Review **1.00** EFL Cup Highlights **2.00** SPFL Round-Up **2.15** SPFL Highlights **2.45** EFL Highlights: thirteen episodes **6.00** SPFL Highlights: double bill **6.30** LIVE **Premier League** Manchester United v Wolverhampton Wanderers (kick-off 8.15pm). Coverage of the top-flight match at Old Trafford. Wolves came out on top in both encounters with the Red Devils last season, with Pablo Sarabia bagging a 70th-minute winne00r here. However, United have shown signs of improvements this term, while the Midlanders have struggled. **11.00** EFL League One Goals **11.30** EFL League Two Goals **12.00m't** EFL Cup Highlights **2.45** EFL Greatest Games **4.00** Championship Season Review **5.00** SPFL: Old Firm Derby Best Goals **5.30-6.00am** SPFL: Edinburgh Derby Best Goals

SKY SPORTS GOLF

6.00am Junior Golf **6.30** Women's PGA Championship **11.30** LPGA Tour Golf **6.00pm** Junior Golf. Highlights of the 2025 Justin Rose Telegraph Junior Golf Championship. **6.30** LIVE **Premier League** West Ham United v Brighton & Hove Albion (kick-off 7.30pm). The top-flight match at London Stadium. The Hammers have changed manager twice since the last time they played host to the Seagulls, when they earned a 1-1 draw via a Mohammed Kudus equaliser after first going a goal down when Mats Wieffer netted his first goal for the club. **11.00** 2025 PGA Tour Year in Review **12.00m't** Ladies European Tour Golf **5.00** Golf Academy **5.30-6.00am** School of Golf

TNT SPORTS 1

7.30am PL Review **8.30** The Breakdown **9.00** Ally's Social Club **10.00** The Ashes **11.00** LIVE **Ultimate Pool Taom Pro Cup** Coverage of the afternoon session on day four. **5.00pm** Roll The Tape **6.00** The Ashes **7.00** LIVE **Ultimate Pool Taom Pro Cup** The evening session on day four at Players Pool and Snooker Lounge in Newcastle-under-Lyme. **10.00** Roll The Tape. Ronnie O'Sullivan revisits the defining moments of his career. **11.00** Serie A **1.00am** MLB Plays of the Week **2.00** TNT Sports Cricket Reload **2.15** The Ashes **3.15-6.30am** LIVE **T20 Super Smash** A match from New Zealand's domestic T20 competition.

TNT SPORTS 2

6.00am The Gallagher PREM – The Wrap Up **6.15** The Gruppetto **6.45** Premier League – The Big Interview **7.15** Training Day **7.45** For The Love Of The Game With Laura & Ally **8.00** LIVE **A-League Women** Western Sydney Wanderers v Wellington Phoenix (kick-off 8.00am). Coverage at Wanderers Football Park. **10.00** Cyclocross **11.00** The Gruppetto **11.30** Premier League **1.00pm** The Ashes **2.00** Premier League Review **3.00** Cyclocross **5.30** LIVE **Cyclocross** Coverage of the latest Women's Superprestige meeting of the season. **6.30** The Gruppetto. Rob Hatch presents news. **7.00** LIVE **Cyclocross** Coverage of the latest Men's Superprestige meeting of the season. **8.15** MotoGP Films **9.00** The Gallagher PREM **10.00** The Gallagher PREM **11.00** The Gallagher PREM **2.00am** Superbike World Championship **3.00** V8 Supercars Highlights **5.00** UEFA Champions League – Stories of the Finals **5.15-7.15am** LIVE **A-League Women** Central Coast Mariners v Brisbane Roar (kick-off 5.15am).

Entertainment & Factual

ITV3 Freeview 10

6.00am Never the Twain **7.00** On the Buses **8.05** Lewis **10.10** Agatha Christie's Marple **12.15pm** The Darling Buds of May **2.25** On the Buses **2.55** FILM Mutiny on the Buses (1972/PG) A bus driver clashes with an officious manager as he struggles to raise enough money to marry his girlfriend. Comedy based on the sitcom, with Reg Varney and Stephen Lewis. ★ **4.40** FILM Carry On Camping (1969/PG) Two men hatch a plan to lure their unsuspecting girlfriends to a nudist camp and introduce them to a life of wild abandon. Bawdy comedy, starring Sid James. ★★★★ **6.25** Agatha Christie's Marple **8.30** Vera **10.30** Midsomer Murders **2.20am** The Larkins **4.00** Never the Twain **4.55** On the Buses **5.20-6.00am** Unwind with ITV

ITV4 Freeview 26

6.00am Magnum, PI **1.15pm** Sharpe **3.30** FILM Nevada Smith (1966/15) An orphan is raised by a gun merchant and dedicates his life to gaining revenge on the three outlaws who murdered his parents. Western, starring Steve McQueen and Karl Malden. ★★★★ **6.10** FILM Apollo 13 (1995/PG) Fact-based drama about the efforts to return the crew of the Apollo 13 lunar mission safely to Earth after an on-board explosion. Starring Tom Hanks, Kevin Bacon and Bill Paxton. ★★★★ **9.00** English Football League Highlights **10.30** FILM Passenger 57 (1992/15) An ex-cop boards a flight on which a terrorist is being transported to prison and becomes embroiled in a hijack attempt. Action thriller, starring Wesley Snipes and Bruce Payne. ★★ **12.05am** All Elite Wrestling: Dynamite **2.05** Sharpe **4.05** The Sweeney **5.05-6.00am** Unwind with ITV

5STAR Freeview 32

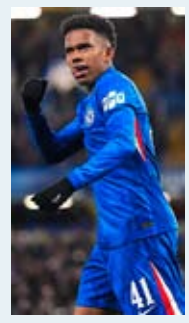
8.00am Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords **1.00pm** Call the Bailiffs: Time to Pay Up **7.00** GPs: Behind Closed Doors **8.00** Casualty 24/7: Every Second Counts **9.00** Kate **10.30** Meghan & Harry: Where Did the Money Go? **12.05am** A Killer Makes a Call **1.05** The Good Wife **3.35-4.00am** Motorway Patrol

REALLY Freeview 17

6.00am Fantasy Homes by the Sea **7.00** Cruise TV with LoveitBookit **8.00** The Repair Shop **9.00** The Repair Shop **10.00** The Repair Shop **1.00pm** The Yorkshire Auction House **6.00** The Repair Shop **7.00** Antiques Road Trip **8.00** The Yorkshire Auction House **10.00** Long Lost Family **12.00m't** Help! My House Is Haunted **1.00** Celebrity Help! My House Is Haunted **2.00** Teleshopping **4.00-6.00am** Salvage Hunters

5ACTION Freeview 33

9.00am Entertainment News on 5 **9.15** Winter Road Rescue **10.20** Ice Road Truckers **12.25pm** FILM Dakota (1945/PG) Western, starring John Wayne and Vera Hruba Ralston. ★★ **2.10** FILM In Old California (1942/PG) Western, starring John Wayne. ★★ **4.00** FILM The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance (1962/U) John Ford's Western, with James Stewart and Lee Marvin. ★★★★★ **6.35** FILM Chisum (1970/PG) Western, starring John Wayne, Forrest Tucker and Christopher George. ★★



Live Premier League
Sky Sports Main Event, 6.30pm
Chelsea take on Bournemouth at Stamford Bridge in what is both sides' final match of 2025. Can 18-year-old winger Estêvão (left) inspire the Blues to a victory?

9.00 FILM Hang 'Em High (1968/18) A former lawman survives being hanged for a crime he did not commit, and sets out to take revenge on the men who left him for dead. Western, with Clint Eastwood and Inger Stevens. ★★★★ **11.25** FILM Papillon (1973/15) A Frenchman imprisoned for life on Devil's Island for a crime he did not commit makes a desperate bid for freedom. Fact-based drama, starring Steve McQueen and Dustin Hoffman. ★★★★★ **2.25** World's Deadliest Weather: Caught on Camera **3.30-4.00am** Highway Patrol

SKY ARTS Freeview 36

6.00am Cosi Fan Tutte **9.10** Tales of the Unexpected **10.15** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.15** FILM Situation Hopeless – But Not Serious (1965/PG) A lonely German air raid warden captures two US airmen during the Second World War, and keeps them in his basement after the war ends. Comedy, with Alec Guinness and Robert Redford. ★★★ **1.10pm** FILM ABBA: The Movie (1977/U) An Australian DJ continually tries and fails to get an interview with the Swedish group. A mix of comedy and concert footage, with Robert Hughes and Stig Anderson. ★★★ **3.00** Riverdance 25th Anniversary Show **5.00** Classic FM's Rising Stars with Julian Lloyd Webber 2025 **6.00** Stories from Tate Britain **7.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **8.00** Van Gogh by Vincent **9.00** Simon & Garfunkel: Old Friends – Live on Stage **11.20** I Was a Teenage Sex Pistol **1.05am** Freddie Mercury: The Great Pretender **2.45** Guy Garvey: From the Vaults **4.45** Discovering: Rod Stewart **5.10-6.00am** The Art of Architecture

U&GOLD

7.25am Only Fools and Horses **12.00m't** Not Going Out **12.35** Only Fools and Horses **2.35** Not Going Out **3.15-4.00am** The Cockfields

U&YESTERDAY Freeview 27

6.10am Great Coastal Railway Journeys **8.00** Bangers & Cash **10.00** The World at War **1.00pm** Bangers & Cash **3.00** Planet Earth II **6.00** Red Dwarf **8.00** Flipping Bangers. Car enthusiasts Gus and Will want to buy a VW Beetle. They locate a guy selling a project car, but fear it's almost too good to be true at less than £1,000. **9.00** Bangers & Cash **2.00-3.00am** Planet Earth II

U&ALIBI

7.15am Murdoch Mysteries **9.00** Father Brown **11.00** Death in Paradise: eight episodes **9.00pm** Dark Winds. Chee pays Manuelito a visit after discovering a link between their cases. **10.00** Father Brown **12.00m't** Death in Paradise **2.40-4.00am** Murdoch Mysteries

SKY MAX

6.00am Flintoff: From Lord's to the Ring **6.50** The 90s: Cinema's Greatest Decade **7.40** The 00s: Cinema's Greatest Decade **8.35** A League of Their Own **2.30pm** Never Mind the Buzzcocks **9.00** Rob & Romesh vs Shakespeare. The duo prepare to perform in Romeo and Juliet at Shakespeare's Globe, with advice from the theatre's artistic director Michelle Terry, and actors Jessie Buckley and Martin Freeman. **10.00** Sport's Funniest Moments **12.00m't** The Ultimate Adventure Movies **1.00** Hold the Front Page **3.00** Rob Beckett's Smart TV **5.00-6.00am** Highway Patrol

SKY ATLANTIC

6.00am Game of Thrones **1.20-6.00am** House of the Dragon. Sci-fi adventure.

SKY WITNESS

6.00am Border Patrol **7.00** Nothing to Declare **9.00** Stop, Search, Seize **10.00** UK Border Force **11.00** A1: Britain's Longest Road **12.00noon** FBI **1.00** The Rookie **2.00** Caught on Dashcam **4.00** Nothing to Declare **7.00** Caught on Dashcam **8.00** Caught on Dashcam Winter Special **9.00** Caught on Dashcam **10.00** FBI: Most Wanted **11.00** Caught on Dashcam **12.00m't** The Rookie **1.00** FBI **2.00** Doc. A chaplain helps Amy reconcile with the past. **3.00** Caught on Dashcam **4.00** Stop, Search, Seize **5.00-6.00am** UK Border Force

SKY COMEDY

8.00am Entourage **12.00noon** Sex and the City **5.45** Community **9.00** Micky Flanagan: If Ever We Needed It **10.15** John Bishop 25 Tour: Live from Dublin. A recording of the comedian's latest tour. **12.00m't** Amy Schumer: Live at the Apollo. Comedy. **1.15** And Just Like That **3.15** Entourage **3.50-5.00am** Curb Your Enthusiasm

DISCOVERY

6.00am Wheeler Dealers World Tour **7.00** Alaska: Homestead Rescue **9.00** Gold Divers **11.00** Kindig Customs **1.00pm** Deadliest Catch **3.00** Gold Rush: Mine Rescue with Freddy & Juan **9.00** Gold Rush. The gold miners of the Yukon put everything on the line to strike it rich. **10.00** The Last Woodsmen. The loader fire forces a new reality, so Adrian revives an old fire truck. **11.00** Expedition Unknown **12.00m't** Moonshiners **1.00** Gold Rush **2.00** Expedition X **3.00-5.00am** Alaska: Homestead Rescue

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

8.00am Air Crash Investigation **10.00** Secret Nazi Science **12.00noon** Top Guns: The Next Generation **3.00** Hitler's Last Stand **5.00** Nazi Death Camp: The Great Escape **6.00** Apocalypse: Hitler Takes on the West **8.00** Liberation: D-Day to Berlin **10.00** Nazis at Nuremberg: The Lost Testimony **11.00** Air Crash Investigation **2.00am** To Catch a Smuggler **2.30** Made in a Day **2.55** Lords of War **3.20** Food Factory **4.10** Exotic Animal ER: Double Dose **5.00-5.30am** Teleshopping

Radio

BBC RADIO 1

97.6-99.8MHz 6.00am Radio 1 Breakfast with Mylo and Rosie **10.00** Ore and Swarzy **2.00pm** Emil and Lauren **6.00** Radio 1's New Music Show with Jack Saunders **8.00** Radio 1's Future Artists with Sian Eleri **10.00** Radio 1's Power Down Playlist with Sian Eleri **11.00** Martha **1.00am** Radio 1's Drum & Bass Mix **1.30** Radio 1's Drum & Bass Mix **2.00** Radio 1 Anthems **4.00** Radio 1 Dance Party Starters **5.00-6.00am** Radio 1 Pop Anthems

BBC RADIO 2

88-91MHz 6.30am The Mark Goodier Breakfast Show **9.30** Gary Davies **12.00noon** Jeremy Vine **2.00** Trevor Nelson **4.00** DJ Spoony **6.30** DJ Spoony's Half Wower **7.00** Radio 2 Piano Room **9.00** Radio 2 All Stars **10.00** Radio 2 Unwinds with Angela Griffin **11.00** Radio 2 Unwinds with Angela Griffin **12.00m't** Ellie Brennan **4.00** Alternative Sounds of the 90s with Dermot O'Leary **5.00-6.00am** Sounds of the 90s with Fearne Cotton

BBC RADIO 3

90.2-92.4MHz 6.30am Breakfast **9.30** Essential Classics **1.00pm** Classical Live **4.00** Composer of the Week: Icons of British Light Music **5.00** Words and Music **6.15** New Generation Artists **7.30** BBC Proms at Christmas 2025 **9.15** The Lebrecht Interview. With Leonard Slatkin. **10.00** Night Tracks **11.30** 'Round Midnight **12.30-6.30am** Through the Night

CHOICE
Drama: Almonds And Raisins
Radio 4, 2.15pm
The second series of the epic family saga. The Sandberg's have set up a life in the Jewish ghetto of Strangeways, Manchester. David, now in his 20s, has become a breadwinner for the family and is in a relationship with Miriam. But with World War One looming, troubling times lie ahead.

BBC RADIO 4

FM 92.4-94.6MHz 6.00am Today **9.00** The Life Scientific **9.30** What Is Quantum? **10.00** Woman's Hour **11.00** Screenshot **11.45** Larkin Revisited **12.00noon** News **12.02** Archive on 4: Prisoners, Saints and Persuaders: The World of ITC **12.57** Weather **1.00** The World at One **1.45** An Almanac of Anxiety: In Search of a Calmer Mind **2.00** The Archers **2.15** Drama: Almonds and Raisins **3.00** Lady Killers with Lucy Worsley **3.30** Heart and Soul **4.00** The Poetry Detective **4.30** What's Up Docs? **5.00** PM **6.00** News **6.15** Ian Hislop's Oldest Jokes **6.30** One Person Found This Helpful **7.00** The Archers **7.15** Front Row **8.00** File on 4 Investigates **8.40** In Touch **9.00** Crossing Continents **9.30** Ramblings **9.55** A Carnival of Animals **10.00** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: A Long Winter **11.00** Uncanny **11.30** BBC National Short Story Award 2025 **12.00m't** News **12.15** Raising Hare **12.30** Larkin Revisited **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.00** As BBC World Service **5.00** News Summary **5.04** Flight of the Vulture **5.32** Weather **5.34** Shipping **5.43** Prayer **5.45-6.00am** Farming

BBC RADIO 5 LIVE

693/909kHz 6.00am 5 Live Breakfast **9.00** Tony Livesey **11.00** Emma Vardy **2.00pm** Marianna Spring **4.00** 5 Live Drive **7.00** 5 Live Sport **10.30** Qasa Alom **1.00am** Dotun Adebayo **5.00-6.00am** Wake Up to Money

BBC RADIO WALES

FM: 94.6MHz 6.00am Radio Wales News Update **6.05** Wake Up with Radio Wales **6.31** Aled Jones: Still Walking in the Air **7.00** Radio Wales Breakfast **9.00** Sam Vaughan **12.00noon** Welsh Wonders **2.00** Justine Jones **5.00** Radio Wales Drive **6.30** Hidden Merthyr **7.00** Molly Palmer **10.00** Eleri Sion **12.00m't** Relax with Radio Wales **1.00-6.00am** As Radio 5 Live

CLASSIC FM

100-102MHz 6.30am Classic FM Breakfast with Tim Lihoreau **9.00** The Classic FM Hall of Fame Hour with Tim Lihoreau **10.00** Aled Jones **2.00pm** Margherita Taylor **6.00** John Brunning **10.00** Calm Classics **1.00am** Bill Overton **4.00-6.30am** Early Breakfast

ABSOLUTE RADIO

DAB 6.00am Jay Lawrence **10.00** Leona Graham **1.00pm** Claire Sturgess **4.00** Emil Franchi **7.00** Sarah Champion **10.00** Tim Burgess **12.00m't-6.00am** Dan Noble

Movies

FILM4

11.00am Anastasia (1997/U) Animation, starring the voices of Meg Ryan. ★★★★ **12.55pm Monster House** (2006/PG) Animated comedy horror, with the voices of Mitchel Musso and Sam Lerner. ★★★★ **2.40 Miracle on 34th Street** (1994/U) Christmas family drama remake, with Richard Attenborough and Elizabeth Perkins. ★★★★ **4.55 The Devil Wears Prada** (2006/PG) Comedy drama, with Meryl Streep. ★★★★ **7.05 Taxi** (2004/12) Comedy adventure remake, starring Queen Latifah. ★★★ **9.00 See How They Run** (2022/12) Mystery comedy, starring Sam Rockwell. ★★★★ **10.55 Last Night in Soho** (2021/18) Mystery horror, starring Thomasin McKenzie. ★★★★ **1.15-3.55am The Entity** (1983/18) Fact-based thriller, starring Barbara Hershey. ★★★

SKY CINEMA PREMIERE

6.00am Karate Kid: Legends (2025/12) Drama sequel, starring Jackie Chan. ★★★ **7.45 A Minecraft Movie** (2025/PG) See 3.20pm. ★★★★ **9.30 Friendship** (2024/15) See 10.30pm. ★★★★ **11.15 Sinners** (2025/15) See 8.00pm. ★★★★ **1.35pm The Phoenician Scheme** (2025/15) See 12.20am. ★★★★ **3.20 A Minecraft Movie** (2025/PG) Fantasy adventure, starring Jason Momoa. ★★★★ **5.05 Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning** (2025/12) Action thriller, starring Tom Cruise and Hayley Atwell. ★★★★ **8.00 Sinners** (2025/15) Horror thriller, starring Michael B Jordan. ★★★★ **10.30 Friendship** (2024/15) Premiere. Comedy, starring Paul Rudd and Kate Mara. ★★★★ **12.20am The Phoenician Scheme** (2025/15) Wes Anderson's comedy, starring Benicio Del Toro and Mia Threapleton. ★★★★ **2.15 Hallow Road** (2025/15) Thriller, starring Rosamund Pike and Matthew Rhys. ★★★★ **3.50 A Make or Break Holiday** (2025/U) Romantic drama, starring Jennifer-Juniper Angeli and Marlee Walchuk. ★★ **5.30-7.05am An Alpine Holiday** (2025/U) Romantic comedy drama, starring Ashley Williams and Laci J Mailey. ★★

SKY CINEMA DRAMA

6.05pm Dear John (2010/12) Drama, with Channing Tatum and Amanda Seyfried. ★★★★ **8.00 About Time** (2013/12) Romantic fantasy comedy, with Domhnall Gleeson. ★★★★ **10.05 Jerry Maguire** (1996/15) Comedy, with Tom Cruise and Renee Zellweger. ★★★★★ **12.35am American Sniper** (2014/15) Drama, starring Bradley Cooper. ★★★★ **3.00 The Bridges at Toko-Ri** (1954/U) Adventure, starring William Holden. ★★★★ **5.30-7.20am The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas** (2008/12) Drama, with David Thewlis. ★★★★

SKY CINEMA HARRY POTTER

6.30pm Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (2004/PG) Adventure, starring Daniel Radcliffe and Emma Watson. ★★★★★ **8.55 Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire** (2005/12) Fantasy adventure, starring Daniel Radcliffe and Rupert Grint. ★★★★ **11.35 Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix** (2007/12) Adventure, starring Daniel Radcliffe and Gary Oldman. ★★★★ **2.00am Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince** (2009/12) Adventure, starring Daniel Radcliffe and Michael Gambon. ★★★★ **4.40-7.15am Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1** (2010/12) Adventure, starring Daniel Radcliffe and Emma Watson. ★★★★

TALKING PICTURES TV

4.50pm The Thirty-Nine Steps (1978/PG) Thriller, starring Robert Powell. ★★★ **6.55 The Man from UNCLE** **8.00 Francis Durbridge's Melissa** **9.05 The Proposition** (2005/18) Australian Western, starring Guy Pearce. ★★★★ **11.10 Pickup Alley** (1957/PG) Crime thriller, with Victor Mature and Anita Ekberg. ★★★ **1.00am Confessions from a Holiday Camp** (1977/18) Comedy, with Robin Askwith. ★★ **2.50-4.25am Hammer House of Mystery and Suspense** A museum's security chief protects his neighbour from a stalker.

GREAT! MYSTERY

5.00pm Murder, She Wrote **6.00 Sue Thomas: FBEye** **7.00 Castle** The author becomes a fugitive when he is framed for murder, which leaves Beckett questioning how well she knows him. **8.00 Unforgettable** Crime drama. **9.00 An Aurora Teagarden Mystery: A Lesson in Murder** (2024/PG) Whodunit, starring Skyler Samuels and Evan Roderick. ★★★ **10.55 Castle** American crime drama. **11.55 Unforgettable** Crime drama. **12.55am Early Release** (2017/PG) Thriller, starring Kelli Williams and Niamh Wilson. ★★ **2.30 Killer Mom** (2017/PG) Thriller, starring Karen Cliche and Kirby Bliss Blanton. ★★★ **3.55-6.00am I Almost Married A Serial Killer** (2019/12) Thriller, starring Krista Allen. ★★

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34 NIGHTS DEPARTING 11TH JANUARY 2027

JANUARY 2027

Mon 11 **Embark *Queen Mary 2* and depart Southampton**

Fri 15 **Funchal, Madeira**

Fri 22 **Basseterre, St. Kitts**

Sun 24 - Mon 25 **Bridgetown, Barbados** (overnight)

A town steeped in history, surrounded by an abundance of natural beauty with plenty to see and do, Bridgetown is the perfect location. Sitting on the southwestern side of the island of Barbados, Bridgetown is a lively and bustling gateway to the wider treasures the island holds. From sun-kissed beaches, underground caverns, and glass-like lagoons to emerald jungles and vast historic plantations, Barbados is a paradise just waiting to be explored

Wed 27 **Castries, St. Lucia**

Tucked on the northwest coast of St. Lucia is its capital, Castries. With a pretty harbour that faces out to the Caribbean Sea, Castries is an idyllic place to explore. With its colonial past, Castries is home to some important, historical landmarks and rewarding lookout points

Thu 28 **St. George's, Grenada**

Fri 29 **Roseau, Dominica**

Sat 30 **English Harbour, Antigua**

On the south coast of the island of Antigua is English Harbour, a small settlement that has a big history. When in English Harbour, there are several landmarks and sights you could seek out to get to know the island and its people, such as Nelson's Dockyard and Shirley Heights Lookout

FEBRUARY 2027

Mon 1 **Amber Cove, Dominican Republic**

Wed 3 **Philipsburg, St. Maarten**

The tiny island of St. Maarten is something really special. Time spent here will leave you full of memories of turquoise waters, colourful buildings, palm-fringed beaches and more. St. Maarten is certainly unique, with the southern part being Dutch and the northern part being French

Wed 10 **Santa Cruz, Tenerife**

Sun 14 **Arrive in Southampton**

Dates not mentioned are spent relaxing at sea

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RUSSELL GRANT

ELLIE GOULDING
Born on this day 1986

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 20

At a time when it feels like there is barely a moment to stop, it becomes all about work with little or no room for having any fun. It doesn't help when a forgetful friend or colleague disappointingly lets you down. As the evening approaches, the pace remains frantic and your thoughts will linger on the worries of the day.

For more call **0905 789 4171**
(80p/min + network access charge)

TAURUS APRIL 21-MAY 21

A number of unforeseen events will take you by surprise. There will be moments when you don't know whether you are coming or going and you are bound to feel overwhelmed by all that is going on around you. Spend a few quiet hours alone this evening and this will really help you organise your thoughts.

For more call **0905 789 4172**
(80p/min + network access charge)

GEMINI MAY 22-JUNE 21

If you ask for help, then it will be provided. Maybe not from the person you expected but someone will be available to properly support you. That's why continuing with a job you are struggling with on your own would be very unwise for you at this time. A skilled workmate can make the job a whole easier for you.

For more call **0905 789 4173**
(80p/min + network access charge)

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 23

You aren't feeling like getting on with everyday tasks at the moment. Even routine chores feel like they are a massive burden. Turn your thoughts to different topics. You're in need of new challenges and mental stimulation that can help you feel more alert and engaged. Just be sure to keep your plans for the future realistic.

For more call **0905 789 4174**
(80p/min + network access charge)

LEO JULY 24-AUG 23

Control your emotions or you might do or say something that you will later bitterly regret. Avoid any spontaneous words and actions. Read all of the messages that you are writing through once more before pressing send. Your aim should be to consider the possible consequences of everything that you say and do.

For more call **0905 789 4175**
(80p/min + network access charge)

VIRGO AUG 24-SEPT 23

Romance has had its ups and downs for you. A friendship hasn't been wonderful when you seem to have had more arguments than happy times together. Now you're ready to address specific issues in order to clear the way for a relationship to get onto a better footing. You may have to keep a certain piece of news to yourself.

For more call **0905 789 4176**
(80p/min + network access charge)

LIBRA SEPT 24-OCT 23

You have a few thoughts on how to improve your family life, your working environment or both. Although there will be some major resistance and a few smaller objections from others, in the end you might choose to turn your ideas into reality, regardless of what anyone else around you might say.

For more call **0905 789 4177**
(80p/min + network access charge)

SCORPIO OCT 24-NOV 22

You want to get some jobs over with and out of the way as soon as possible but some people around you won't seem able to keep up with your pace. And you can understand why they just don't feel the way you do and if you show them some consideration, then they will show you plenty of gratitude.

For more call **0905 789 4178**
(80p/min + network access charge)

SAGITTARIUS NOV 23-DEC 21

At long last you are finally receiving the proper recognition that you deserve for all the hard work you have done in the past. This could manifest as a financial bonus or an exciting proposal for you to think carefully about in the New Year. You have worked hard for this and it is unlikely you will want to decline this offer.

For more call **0905 789 4179**
(80p/min + network access charge)

CAPRICORN DEC 22-JAN 20

It will be obvious from the feedback that you are getting from your family and friends that they hold you in very high regard. You come across as being careful, conscientious and trustworthy. With you making such a positive impression on other people, be sure to properly outline your goals for the future.

For more call **0905 789 4180**
(80p/min + network access charge)

AQUARIUS JAN 21-FEB 19

You might find it a lot easier to stay in the background, especially if you would prefer not to get involved in other people's personal business. You're quite popular right now but it can all get a bit too much for you when someone can't seem to make a decision without constantly asking for your thoughts and opinions.

For more call **0905 789 4181**
(80p/min + network access charge)

PISCES FEB 20-MARCH 20

Expect it to be a slow and sluggish morning when not much will be accomplished. Either you or someone who is close to you may be feeling unwell. Take it easy and don't force yourself to do anything you don't want to do. If necessary, make your excuses and back out of any plans made for this evening.

For more call **0905 789 4182**
(80p/min + network access charge)

Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge - maximum of 5 minutes duration. You must be over 18 and have the bill payer's permission. Service provider Spoke. Helpline 0333 202 3390

NUTWOOD TALES

To order a copy of the Rupert Annual 2024 (£10.99) visit www.expressbookshop.com or call Express Bookshop on 020 3176 3832. Free UK P&P on online orders over £25.

RUPERT AND THE COUGH DROP No.40

He tells them of his thrilling flight
To help old Santa in his plight.

With crackers gay the time goes fast,
And Rupert pulls the very last.

After some games Rupert's pals gather round to hear his story. Podgy gasps to hear of the snuffle-hound and the airship, and how useful his own cough drop was. "D'you mean to say that because I made a cough drop by mistake we shall get some presents after all ?" he asks. "That's what Santa Claus said," laughs Rupert. "Meanwhile, let's pull some of these Christmas crackers."

CALVIN AND HOBBES BILL WATTERSON

FAITH, HOPE AND SUE LISA WILD

Winter.

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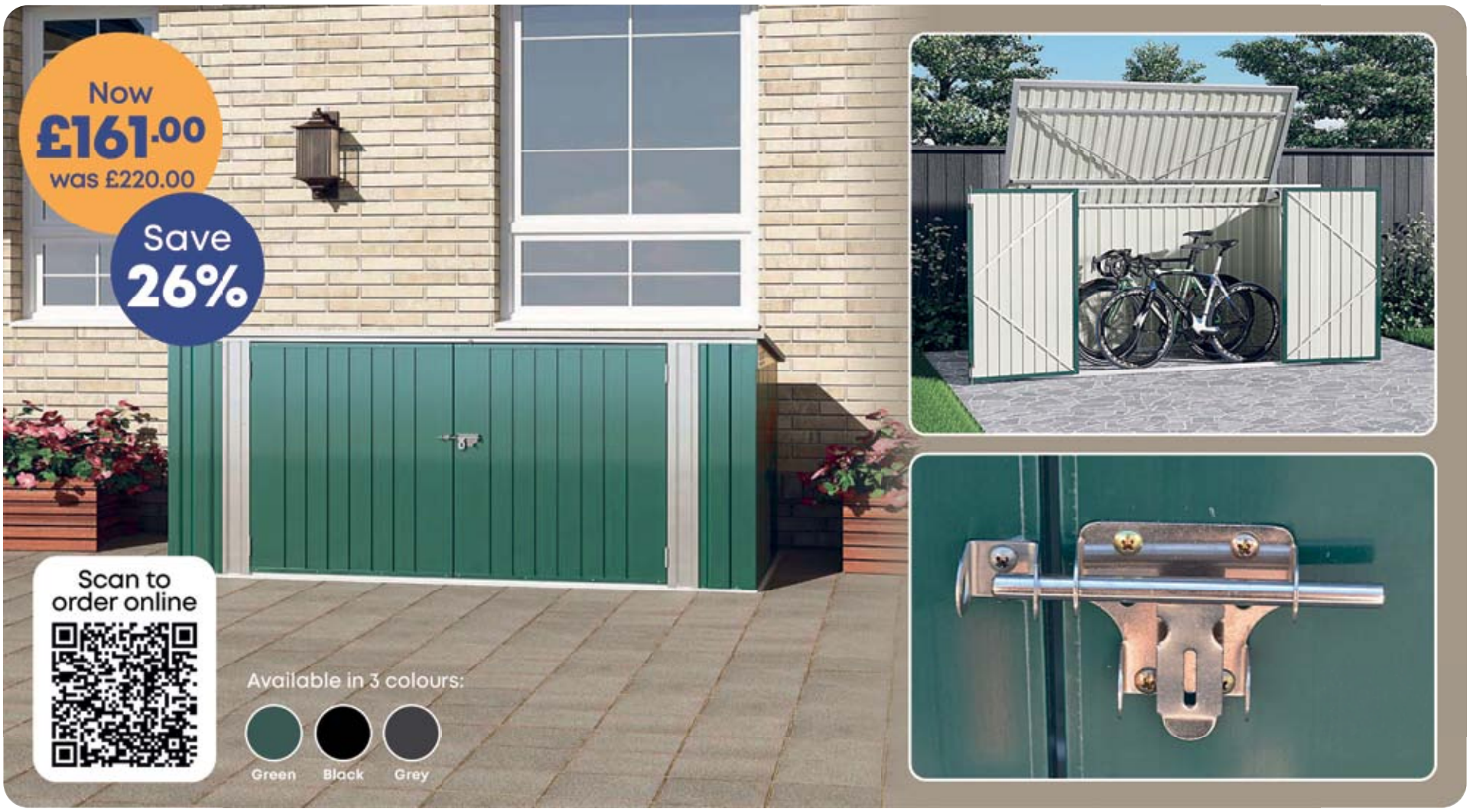
LOCKABLE STEEL STORAGE SHED



Cycling enthusiasts and homeowners alike will appreciate the practicality of this metal bike storage shed. Constructed from durable, weather-resistant steel, it safeguards bicycles from rain, snow, and harsh weather, helping them stay protected from the elements year-round. The sloped roof channels water away, preventing pooling and protecting your bikes from damage.

Lockable double doors (padlock not included) provide added security for valuable bicycles, while the shed's spacious interior can comfortably store 3 to 4 bikes, keeping them organised and off the driveway or garage. Its compact footprint allows it to fit into most gardens, patios, or side yards without taking up unnecessary space. Finished in green, it blends effortlessly into outdoor settings.

> "Perfect size for two bikes and some tools. The swing doors make access really simple. Definitely worth it."
>
> ★★★★★
> **Rebecca J.**

Beyond bikes, the shed can also house wheelie bins or other outdoor items, helping maintain a tidy, clutter-free garden. Easy to assemble and built for durability, this shed is a reliable solution for protecting outdoor belongings. Practical, secure, and weatherproof, it ensures your bikes remain safe, organised, and ready for your next ride throughout the year.

- ✓ Ideal for storing 3-4 bicycles or wheelie bins
- ✓ Weather Protection: Sloped roof prevents water buildup
- ✓ Flip-top lid and swing doors for easy access
- ✓ Made from: Weather-resistant steel
- ✓ Self-assembly required

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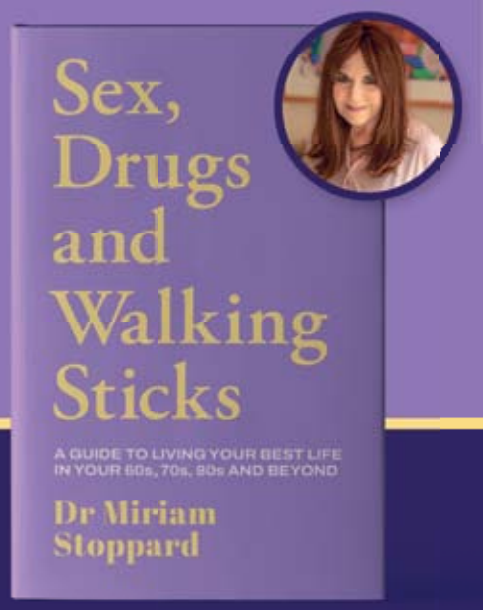
Trustpilot

Sex, Drugs and Walking Sticks

by Dr Miriam Stoppard



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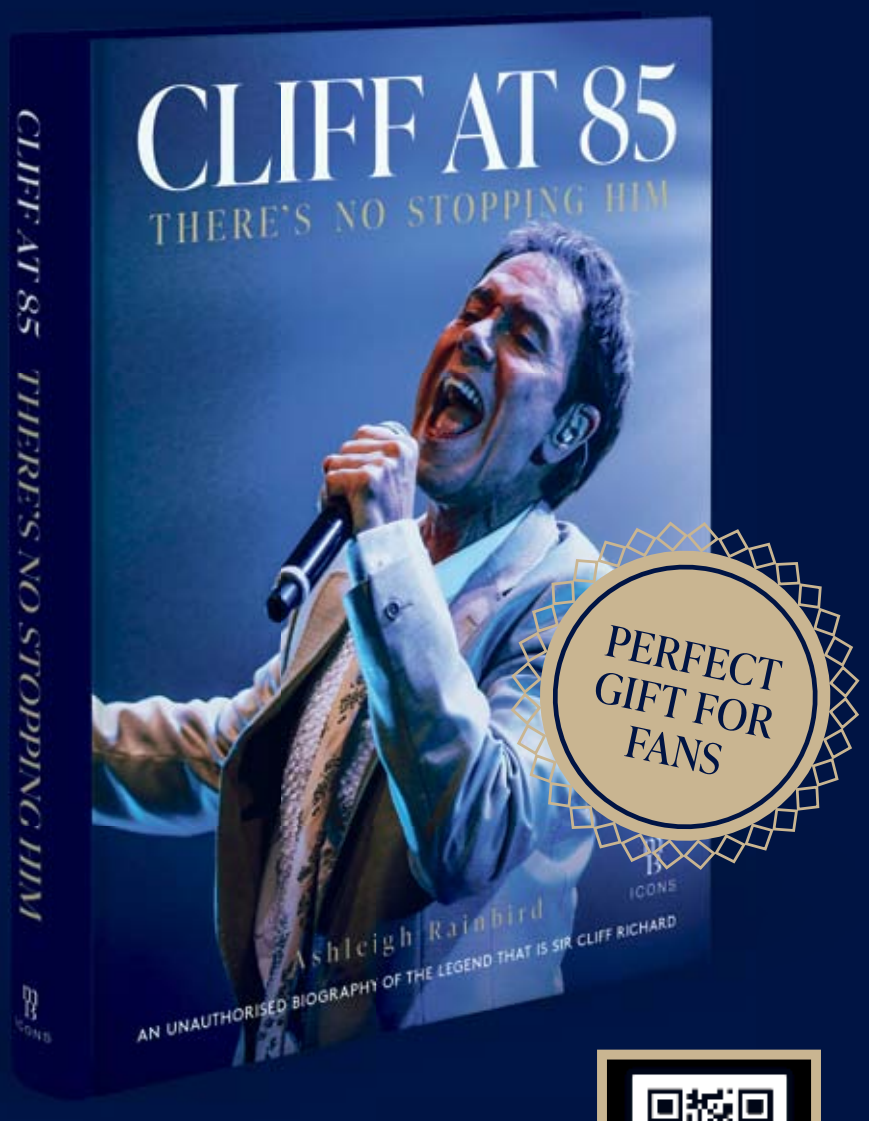
ON SALE FROM ALL GOOD BOOKSHOPS AND AMAZON

SIR CLIFF RICHARD AT 85

A photographic celebration of the legend featuring rare and unseen images


CLIFF AT 85
THERE'S NO STOPPING HIM
Ashleigh Rainbird
AN UNAUTHORISED BIOGRAPHY OF THE LEGEND THAT IS SIR CLIFF RICHARD
ICONS

PERFECT GIFT FOR FANS

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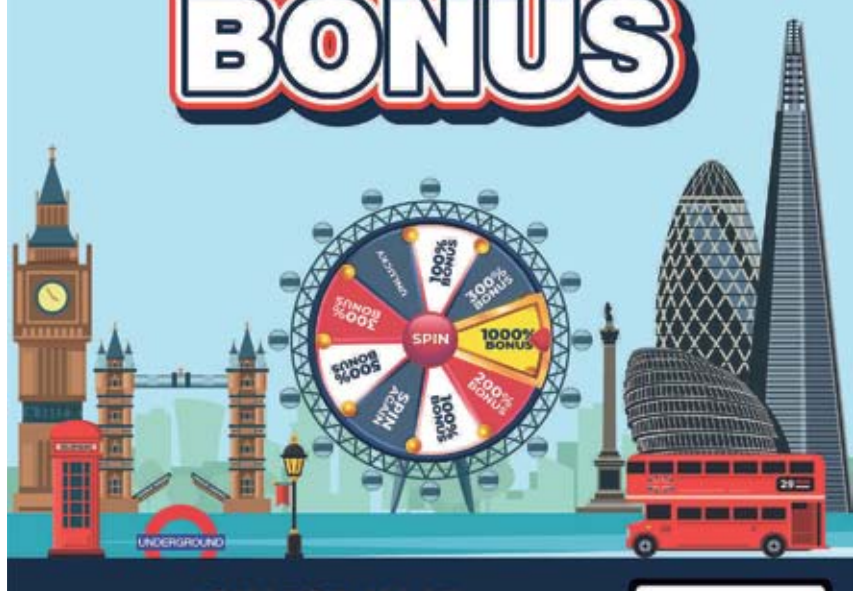

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City & Business

AT A GLANCE

STOCK MARKET			
FTSE 100	9866.5	▼	-4.2
FTSE 250	22407.5	▲	+93.0
FTSE ALL SHARE	5317.7	▲	+0.7
Shares Traded	9311.4 million		

POPULAR SHARES ON THE RISE		
Abrdn	205	+1¼
AstraZeneca	13748	+74
BP	427	+1¼
Centrica	169	+½
Convatec Group	243	+5
GSK	1823	+17½
Haleon	373	+¾
Lloyds Banking Group	97¼	+¼
Marks & Spencer Group	321½	+½
National Grid	1141	+3½
Saga	392	+8½
Sainsbury (J)	325	+1¾
Shell	2706	+8
Tesco	440¼	+2¼
Unilever	4860	+22
Vodafone Group	97½	+¼

POPULAR SHARES ON THE SLIDE		
Aviva	680	-3¼
BAE Systems	1698½	-13
Barclays	469¼	-½
BT Group	183	-2
HSBC Holdings	1166	-9½
Int Consolidated Airlines	413¾	-2¼
NatWest Group	646	-¾
Rolls-Royce Holdings	1137	-12½
Whitbread	2542	-8

WORLD MARKETS			
WALL STREET	48461.9	▼	-249
TOKYO	50526.9	▼	-223.5
HONG KONG	25635.2	▼	-183.7
GERMANY	24351.1	▲	+11.1
FRANCE	8112.0	▲	+8.4

STERLING VALUE			
Dollar	1.349	▼	-0.002
Yen	210.579	▲	+0.082
Euro	1.148	▲	+0.001

DOLLAR VALUE			
Dollar/Yen	156.093	▲	+0.2468
Dollar/Euro	0.851	▲	+0.0018

COMMODITIES		
GOLD($)	▼	4337.11
KRUGERRAND(£)	▼	3211.52
SILVER(pence)	▼	5351.80
BRENT CRUDE($)	▲	61.44

OTHER INDICATORS	
Base rate	3.75%
Halifax mortgage rate	5.95%
Retail Price Index	+3.8% (CPI +3.2%)
House price Index	+1.7%
Unemployment	1,832,000

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TOURIST'S POUND

Australia	1.96 dollar
Canada	1.79 dollar
China	8.87 renminbi
Czech Rep.	26.07 koruna
Denmark	8.12 krone
Eurozone	1.13 euro
Hong Kong	9.85 dollar
Hungary	415.77 forint
Israel	4.04 shekel
Japan	202.19 yen
Jordan	0.89 dinar
Mexico	22.87 peso
New Zealand	2.24 dollar
Norway	13.05 krone
Poland	4.59 zloty
Saudi Arabia	4.82 riyal
South Africa	21.61 rand
Sweden	11.76 krona
Switzerland	1.03 franc
Thailand	40.69 baht
Turkey	53.84 lira
United States	1.33 dollar

Investors in the market for big portfolio boost in 2026

By **City AM Reporter**

NEARLY two-thirds of investors with at least £100,000 in assets plan to increase the amounts they put away in 2026 despite market uncertainties.

More than a fifth will look to bolster their portfolios significantly, according to the research for Scottish Widows.

Despite market challenges, they aim to increase their pot by £33,698, on average. The survey also found that around a quarter will invest the same amount as in 2025, 8% will commit less and 6% are not sure yet.

Savers keeping options open heading into 2026

Scottish Widows revealed the figures before publishing its investor confidence barometer report next month. It found US tariffs, geopolitical disruption and changes in government drove some portfolio moves this year – and are still concerns in 2026. Nearly half increased the amount salted away in 2025.

The investment firm's research also showed differences between advised and non-advised market players.

Some 74% of those getting advice aim to increase the amount they invest, by an average of £38,983 – just over £5,000 more than the survey average of £33,698.

The majority of these going bigger in 2026 said this was prompted by an expectation of better market returns, compared with 36% of non-advised investors. The survey was carried out in July.

Scottish Widows' Jenny Davidson said: "Global events have resulted in 2025 being a bumpy ride but despite this the data tells us time and again that investors with a long-term strategy generally reap the rewards of their patience. With all that is going on in the world, that lesson is as timely as ever.

"Changes in regulation and the new advances in technology mean that financial education and guidance is set to become increasingly accessible in 2026. The focus will be on making sure that regulated financial advice, guidance and technology can work in harmony to close the sizeable advice gap."

The Financial Conduct Authority has given the go-ahead for firms it deems fit to make specific recommendations to consumers from April. According to FCA data, around seven million adults with £10,000 or more in cash savings could be missing out on the benefits of investing.

IT'S THE END FOR CINEMA CHAIN BOSS

Cinema chain Everyman has seen a drop in box office takings

THE boss of luxury cinema chain Everyman Media Group has stepped down just weeks after a warning over sales and profits.

Shareholders were told yesterday morning that chief executive Alex Scrimgeour was leaving with immediate effect. Non-executive director Farah Golant will step in on an interim basis.

Everyman said this month that box office performance in the fourth quarter was weaker than expected. It expects earnings of at least £16.8million for the year, down from guidance of £20m.

Scrimgeour took the helm in 2021 during the pandemic. Dan Coatsworth, head of markets at AJ Bell, said: "The share price fell by 76% during his tenure, and time had run out."

Rolls-Royce's Mr Erginbilgic

Driven Rolls-Royce chief to get £100m share bonus

THE CEO of Rolls-Royce is expected to receive a share-based bumper bonus that could exceed £100million.

Tufan Erginbilgic was awarded 8.3 million shares as part of package to take over the FTSE 100 giant in 2023.

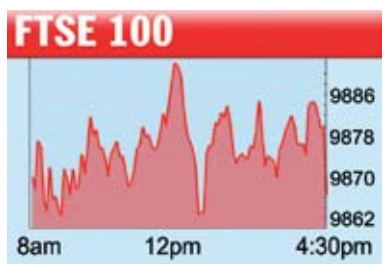
At the time, the "golden hello", which vests in two tranches in 2027 and 2028, was valued at just over £8m. Shares in Rolls-Royce were languishing below 100p amid concerns over debt, operational performance and strategy.

It has now been reported that at the current share price of 1,149p, Mr Erginbilgic's original award would be worth about £106m if it vests in full. The potential payout would rank among the largest for a UK-listed company.

Mr Erginbilgic earned £13.6m in 2023, including compensation from Global Infrastructure Partners, placing him among the highest-paid FTSE 100 executives. His remuneration was £4.1m last year as one-off awards rolled off.

++ THE FTSE 100 THE FTSE 100 THE FTSE 100 ++

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
3i Group	3230#	+6	4459	2999
A.B. Foods	2121#	+8	2337	1841½
Admiral Group	†			
Airtel Africa	344¼	+8½	344¼	113¼
Alliance Trust	1276#	+2	1324	1050
Anglo American	2985	-27	3085	2003¾
Antofagasta	3211	-13	3299	1383
Ashtead Group	5146	-38	5538	3659
AstraZeneca	13748	+74	14148	9667
Auto Trader	584¾	-1¾	908½	583¼
Aviva	680	-3¼	692½	465½
Babcock International	1217#	-43	1330	485¾
BAE Systems	1698½	-13	2060	1145
Barclays	469¼	-½	474¼	241¾
Barratt Development	374¼	+1	482¼	350
Beazley Group	837½	-1	973	769
Berkeley Grp Hldgs	3900	+10	4324	3462
BP	427	+1¼	476¼	331¾
British Amer.Tob	4170#	-45	4421	2875
British Land	398¾#	+6½	420½	321¼
BT Group	183#	-2	223¾	138¼
Bunzl	2072#	-8	3452	2066
Burberry Group	1259	+6½	1371½	627¾
Centrica	169	+½	180	131¾
Coca-Cola HBC	3822		4034	2708
Compass Group	2363	-7	2843	2319
Convatec Group	243	+5	295½	219¼
CRH	9434	+94	9572	6142
Croda International	2762	+14	3385	2465
DCC	4690	-20	5600	4528
Diageo	1589½		2555	1588
Diploma	5310	-15	5650	3624
EasyJet	505¾	-3¾	587¾	427½
Entain	757¾	+7¼	1022	501¼
Experian Group	3431	+44	4088	3091
F&C Inv Tst	1241	-5	1250	962
Flutter Entert.	16075	+10	23630	14670
Fresnillo	3194	-6	3376	616
Games Workshop	18930#	+50	19840	12410
GlaxoSmithKline	1823#	+17½	1833½	1264
Glencore	396½	+2¼	404¼	230
Haleon	373	+¾	415¼	326½
Halma	3520#	-48	3658	2360
Hikma	1536	+3	2340	1507
Hiscox	1418	-10	1436	1035
HSBC Holdings	1166	-9½	1175½	713¼
IMI	2482	+10	2524	1606
Imperial Brands	3108#	-18	3312	2551
Informa	882¼	+1¾	993½	640¼
InterContinental Htl	10365	-145	10880	7424
Intermediate Cap.Grp	2052#	+10	2450	1569
Intertek Group	4656	-2	5385	4064
Intl Consolidated Airlines	413¾	-2¼	427½	224½
JD Sports	83¾	+¾	104½	63¼
Kingfisher	312¼	+½	317	228¼
Land Securities	620#	+12½	650	499½
Legal & General	259	+1¼	263	215¼
Lloyds Banking Grp	97¼	+¼	98	53
London & Stamford Prop.	188¼#	+1¾	204½	170½
London Stock Ex	8892	+18	12095	8138
M&G	285	+1¼	287	172¾
Marks & Spencer	321½#	+½	411¼	318½
Melrose	578¼	-7¾	680	386
Mondi	904½	+12½	1326	819
National Grid	1141#	+3½	1182	910¾
NatWest Group	646	-¾	648½	374½
Next	13510#	-35	14580	9028
Pearson	1045	-9	1379	984½
Pershing Square Hold	4822	-80	5090	3244
Persimmon	1341½	+5½	1405	1037½
Phoenix Group	730½	+2	732½	479½
Prudential	1145	-5	1156	595¼
Reckitt Benckiser	5998	+20	6080	4633
RELX	3049	+24	4135	2972
Rentokil Initial	442½	+½	448½	309½
Rightmove	515½	+¼	823¾	512
Rio Tinto	5950	-32	6025	4117
Rolls-Royce Group	1137	-12½	1190	563½
Sage Group	1080	+½	1348	1063
Sainsbury (J)	325	+1¾	355¾	228¾
Schroders	406¼	-1¼	428¼	289¼
Scottish Mortgage	1175½	-10	1193	815¼
SEGRO	713¾	+8¼	732¼	599
Severn Trent	2774#	+31	2852	2338
Shell	2706	+8	2931½	2291½
Smith & Nephew	1228	+7½	1435	937¾
Smiths Group	2366	-14	2550	1687
Smurfit Kappa	3850	+13	4495	2558
Spirax-Sarco	6815	+40	8190	5445
SSE	2171#	+16	2307	1463½
St James's Place	1379½	-18½	1405½	791
Standard Chartered	1805	-½	1814	878¾
Tesco	440¼	+2¼	475½	314½
Unilever	4860	+22	6177½	4793½
United Utilities	1188#	+9½	1237	937½
Vodafone Group	97½#	+¼	98	64
Weir Group	2838	-14	2990	1984
Whitbread	2542	-8	3274	2335



Fewer new firms due to fraud rules

COMPANIES House's new rules to stop fraud have sparked a dramatic fall in new registrations.

A new law came into effect on November 18 requiring company directors to verify their identities, with failure to do so carrying enforcement risks. The rules were part of Companies House's new ID powers, which aim to make it more difficult for individuals to establish companies or appoint directors using fake or stolen identities.

The powers also allow the agency to take a "proportionate approach to enforcement" and registrations have reportedly declined by about 30% since the implementation of measures. They fell from 18,199 in the week before the rules came into effect to fewer than 13,000 in each of the five weeks before Christmas.

+ BG + Barclays + BT + Centrica + Dixons Carphone + First Group + HSBC + Kingfisher + Marks & Spencer + Next + Prudential + Rolls-Royce + Sainsburys + Tesco + Unilever + Vodafone + Whitbread + WPP

SHARES AT A GLANCE

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	LOW
Aerospace & Defence				
Avon Rubber	1812	+12	2180	1338
Babcock International	1217#	-43	1330	485¾
BAE Systems	1698½	-13	2060	1145
Chemring Group	468½	-3½	593	297½
QinetiQ Group	438	-2½	572	361
Rolls-Royce Group	1137	-12½	1190	563½
Senior	192¼	-½	202	115¾
Alternative Energy				
Porvair	826	-4	856	626
Banks				
Barclays	469¼	-½	474¼	241¾
Bco Santander	870	-2	875	359½
Close Brothers	520	+½	550½	208
HSBC Holdings	1166	-9½	1175½	713¼
Investec	550½#	-6½	596	414
Lloyds Banking Grp	97¼	+¼	98	53
Metro Bank	119½	-1½	133½	81
NatWest Group	646	-¾	648½	374½
Paragon Group	857½	+5	970	686½
Standard Chartered	1805	-½	1814	878¾
Beverages				
Barr (AG)	630	+4	711	558
Coca-Cola HBC	3822		4034	2708
Diageo	1589½		2555	1588
Chemicals				
Carclo	53¼	-2¼	80	21
Croda International	2762	+14	3385	2465
Elementis	167½	+1½	176½	115
Johnson Matthey	2158#	-12	2188	1156
Synthomer	63½	+1½	161	46
Treatt	207½	+5½	492	186½
Victrex	662	+16	1076	589
Construction & Materials				
Balfour Beatty	711	-5½	721½	390½
Costain Group	158½	-½	168	86
CRH	9434	+94	9572	6142
Dialight	340	-7	350	89
Galliford Try	517	-3	539	321
Gleeson (MJ)	417	+2	538	320
Keller Group	1652	-8	1672	1240
Kier Group	222	-1½	231½	115¼
Marshalls	181½	+¾	294½	162
Morgan Sindall	4650	-5	4975	2945
Severfield-Rowen	28		52¼	19
Smart (J) & Co	132½#		132½	110
Electricity				
Drax Group	835	+2½	836	536½
SSE	2171#	+16	2307	1463½
Telecom Plus	1358	+2	2085	1344
Electronic & Electrical Equipment				
Acal	603#	-5	738	486
Halma	3520#	-48	3658	2360
Oxford Instruments	2075#	+20	2165	1500
Renishaw	3485	+5	3725	2145
TT Electronics	112¾		154	73
XP Power	905	+35	1348	621
Equity Investment Instruments				
Aberdeen Asian Sml	368	+2	380	256
Aberforth Smll.Co.	1572	+2	1588	1212
Acorn Income				
Albion Tech.& Gen. VCT	66		71	65½
Alliance Trust	1276#	+2	1324	1050
Aurora Inv.Tst.	272	+3½	273	212½
AVI Global Tst	256#		266½	202
Baillie Gifford Japan	896	+8	951	657
Baillie Gifford Shin Nip	128½		136½	95½
Bankers Inv.Tst	132¾	+¾	135	101
Baronsmead VCT.2	48½		52	46½
BH Macro GBP	396	+½	414	371½
Biotech Growth Trust	1225	+10	1285	620
BlackRock Mining	829	-18	859	406½
Bluehone AiM VCT2	28¼#		31	28¼
British Assets Tst	27	+¼	49¼	26
Brunner Inv.Tst.	1430	+10	1470	1140
Caledonia Inv.	380#		391½	334½
City Natural Res.Yld	357	-2	363	165¾
City Of London	529		533	411½
Dunedin Ent.IT.				
Dunedin Income	302	-1	309	262
Edin Wwide Inv	214½	-3	219½	143
Edin.Inv.Tst.	818		839	680
Edin.US Tracker	368#	+5	370	289½
Elderstreet VCT	38¾		41	36¾
F&C Cap&Inc	339½#	-2½	345	287
F&C Inv Tst	1241	-5	1250	962
F&C Smaller Cos	176¼#		177½	136½
F&C US Smaller Companies	1390	+22½	1522½	1115
Fidelity Asian	594	+2	628	454
Fidelity European	415	+½	431	338½
Fidelity Special	415½#	+2	415½	295½
Finsbury Gwth&In	822	+5	962	795
Foresight Tech.VCT	65½		75½	62
Genesis E.M.F.	1054	+10	1068	632
Graphite Ent	1496		1600	1070
Hansa Tst 'A'	266	-1	272	190
Hansa Tst Plc	272		278	192½
Henderson Far Est	240	+4	253½	190½
Henderson High Inc	190½#	+½	190½	151
Herald Inv.Tst.	2400	+10	2560	1738
HGCapital Tst.	507		539	448
HSBC Infrastructure	115½#	+1	125¼	106
Impax Env.Mkt	396½		416½	310½
Int.Biotech.Tst.	972#	-8	996	480
International Public	125¼	+1¼	127¾	107¾
Invesco Asia.	425#	+3	436	300
Invesco Perp UK	369	-4½	390	313½
JPM American	1116		1186	869
JPM Asian	443½	+5½	459½	331½
JPM Claverhouse	862		872	660
JPM Emerg Mkt	135¾	+1¾	139	95
JPM Euro Sml Co.	593#	+4	594	443
JPM Global Emerging	168#	+1	169½	118½
JPM Indian	1020	+4	1106	904
JPM Japanese	692#	-13	747	493
JPM Overseas IT	572#	+6	610	480
JPM Smaller Co	320#	-2½	338	253
JPM US Sml Co.	403	+3	516	338
Jupiter Euro.	898	+7	959	757
JZ Capital Partners	188		220	184
Law Debenture	1050#	+2	1070	788
Lowland Invest Co	159½#		160½	114½
Majedie Inv.	271	-2	280	230
Manchester&Lon.	798	+8	944	512
Martin Currie Prtflo Tst.	352	+½	386	295
Maven Income And Growth VCT 3	33½#		38	33½
Mercantile Inv Tst	256#	+1	258	202½
Merchants Tst.	598	+5	601	474
Mid Wynd Int.	770	+2	836	664
Monks Inv.Tst.	1490	+12	1548	1036
Montanaro Euro Tst.	164½#		183½	138
Montanaro Uk	101	+¾	106½	87¾
Murray Inc.Tst.	914	+1	938	754
Murray Int.Tst	334½	+3	335	239
New India	774	-5	832	686
New Star Inv.Tst.	124		126	100
North Atl.Smlr.Tst				
Northern 2 VCT	53½#		57	52½
Northern Venture	56½#		58½	55½
Oxford Tech 2 VCT	6		7	5½
Pacific Assets.	362	+1	378	302
Pacific Horizon	769	+10	792	507
Pantheon Int.	376	+4	380½	266
Pershing Square Hold	4822	-80	5090	3244
Polar Cap.Tech	461	-2½	481	255½
RCM Technology Trust	524	-1	548	307
RIT Capital Partners	2240	-5	2270	1722
Ruffer Investment	294½	+1½	304	264
Schroder Asia	653#	-9	678	461½
Schroder Inc.	347#	-5	354	255
Schroder Japan	313	+1	314	209
Schroder UK	205		209	158½
Schroder UK M&S	704	-2	716	520
Scottish American	509	+2	525	454½
Scottish Mortgage	1175½	-10	1193	815¼
Shires Inc.	313½	+4	318¼	222
Small Comp Div.Tst	139½#	+½	161	124
Standard Life Equity	399#	-1	402	288½
Standard Life UK Sml	503	+3	531	426
Temple Bar.	376½#	-½	380	258
Templeton Emrg.	233#	+3	240½	151¾
The European Inv.Tst	107	+1	109	84
Throgmorton Tst.	619	+3	622	469
TR Euro.Growth	213	+1	221	163
TR Prop. IT	317½#	+2½	338½	277½
Witan Pacific	304	+4	322	214
Wwide Healthcare	377#	+1	397	265½
Financial Services				
3i Group	3230#	+6	4459	2999
3i Infrastructure	373½#	+3½	376½	301
Abrdn	205	+1¼	210¼	123¾
Ashmore Group	174¾	+½	193	125
Guinness Peat Group	83	+¾	96	68¼
IG Group	1307	-5	1315¾	913
Intermediate Cap.Grp.	2052#	+10	2450	1569
International Pers Fin	233	+13	235	121½
IP Group	59	+1½	65	34¾
Jupiter Fund Man.	157½	-1½	159¼	68
Liontrust Asset Man	268½#	+1	476	248
London Stock Ex.	8892	+18	12095	8138
M&G	285	+1¼	287	172¾
Man Group	226½	-¼	228¼	154¾
Provident Financial	118¼	-1¾	128½	44½
Rathbone Brothers	1922	+4	1964	1406
S & U	2100	+130	2100	1330
Schroders	406¼	-1¼	428¼	289¼
St James's Place	1379½	-18½	1405½	791
Tullett Prebon.	257	-3	311½	228
Walker Crips Group	13¼		17	7½
Fixed Line Telecommunications				
Airtel Africa	344¼	+8½	344¼	113¼
BT Group	183#	-2	222¾	138¼
Food & Drug Retailers				
Greggs	1677	-6	2832	1418
Marks & Spencer	321½#	+½	411¼	318½
Ocado	239¾	-2	395½	172¼
Sainsbury (J)	325	+1¾	355¾	228¾
Tesco	440¼	+2¼	475½	314½
Food Producers				
A.B. Foods.	2121#	+8	2337	1841½
Anglo-Eastern	1350	+20	1425	602
Carr's Milling	132	+¼	157	101½
Cranswick.	4995#	+65	5490	4625
Glanbia	1267¾	+39¼	1376½	792¾
Greencore Group	252		278½	169¼
Kerry Grp 'A' Shs.	6499½	-296¼	8799½	6429¾
Premier Foods	172¾		214½	170¾
REA Holdings	123	-½	125	61½
Tate & Lyle	378¼#	-1½	661	358
Gas, Water & Multiutilities				
Centrica	169	+½	180	131¾
National Grid	1141#	+3½	1182	910¾
Pennon Group	528½	+6½	552	387½
Severn Trent	2774#	+31	2852	2338
United Utilities	1188#	+9½	1237	937½
General Industrials				
Bunzl.	2072#	-8	3452	2066
Goodwin.	21300	+1200	23300	6180
Melrose	578¼	-7¾	680	386
Mondi.	904½	+12½	1326	819
Smiths Group	2366	-14	2550	1687
Smurfit Kappa	2850	+13	4495	2558
General Retailers				
ASOS.	275	+6	445¼	218½
Auto Trader	584¾	-1¾	908½	583¼
B&M Europ Value Ret	167	+6¼	367	155¼
Caffyns.	415#		500	415
Dixons Carphone	127½#	+½	146	82
Dunelm	1134	+22	1232	858½
Frasers Group	672½	+2½	770	546
Halfords Group	139#	-½	174½	116¼
Headlam Group.	463¼	-1¼	142½	46½
Howden Joinery	833	+2	914½	679½
Inchcape	773½	+5½	808	638
JD Sports	83¾	+¾	104½	63¼
Kingfisher	312¼	+½	317	228¼
Next.	13510#	-35	14580	9028
Pets At Home	200¼#	+1¾	273¼	192¾
RM Group.	115	+2	118	82
Topps Tiles	41#	-1½	50	29
WH Smith	645	+22	1307	613½
Health Care Equipment & Services				
Convatec Group	243	+5	295½	219¼
Flying Brands	+¾		2	+½
Smith & Nephew	1228	+7½	1435	937¾
Household Goods & Home Construction				
Barratt Development	374¼	+1	482¼	350
Bellway	2700#	+18	2982	2166
Berkeley Grp Hldgs	3900	+10	4324	3462
Bovis Homes	629½	+2¾	698	510¾
Mcbride.	139¾	-¼	159	99¼
Persimmon	1341½	+5½	1405	1037½
Reckitt Benckiser	5998	+20	6080	4633
Taylor Wimpey	104¾	+½	123¼	93
Industrial Engineering				
Bodycote	697½	+3½	714	460½
Hill & Smith	2170#		2265	1530
IMI	2482	+10	2524	1606
Morgan Crucible.	217½	+1	274	177½
Northgate	380½#	+2	395	273½
Rotork	327	+3½	352	275¾
Spirax-Sarco	6815	+40	8190	5445
Vesuvius	396¾	+2¼	423	313¾
Weir Group	2838	-14	2990	1984
Xaar.	98	-2½	145	59
Industrial Metals & Mining				
Castings.	275½#	+½	319	234
Evraz				
Ferrexpo	76	+2½	113	44¼
Industrial Transportation				
Braemar Shipping Serv	220½#	-2	278	201
Clarkson	3785	-5	4505	2995
FirstGroup	190¾#	-¼	233	146½
Fisher (J) & Sons	375	+5	403	285
Leisure Goods				
Games Workshop.	18930#	+50	19840	12410
Photo-Me Intl.	151¾	+¾	230	149¾
Life Insurance				
Aviva.	680	-3¼	692½	465½
Chesnara.	299	+3	299	212¾
Legal & General	259	+1¼	263	215¼
Phoenix Group	730½	+2	732½	479½
Prudential.	1145	-5	1156	595¼
Media				
4imprint Group	3890	+35	6030	3035
Bloomsbury Publish.	485½	+7	674	468
Future.	528	+1	1029	521½
Informa	882¼	+1¾	993½	640¼
ITV	81½		87¾	66¼
Pearson	1045	-9	1379	984½
Reach	54¾	+½	88¼	53
STV Group	110	-4½	220½	103
Wilmington Group.	295	-5	390	289½
WPP Group	333	+5¾	830½	269
Mining				
Anglo American	2985	-27	3085	2003¾
Anglo Pacific	113½	+¼	117	50
Antofagasta.	3211	-13	3299	1383
BHP Billiton	2247	-14	2286	1609½
Endeavour Mining	3818	-158	3986	1392
Fresnillo.	3194	-6	3376	616
Gem Diamonds	3		12	2¾
Glencore	396½	+2¼	404¼	230
Hochschild Mining.	497	-8½	520¼	168
Kenmare Res.	230½	+1	436	227
Petra Diamonds	17¾		30½	10½
Rio Tinto	5950	-32	6025	4117
Mobile Telecommunications				
Vodafone Group	97½#	+¼	98	64
Nonequity Investment Instruments				
Oryx Int.Gwth.	1245	-2½	1392½	1042½
Rights &Iss.Inc	2037½	+22½	2420	1670
Nonlife Insurance				
Admiral Group				
Beazley Group	837½	-1	973	769
Hiscox.	1418	-10	1436	1035
Lancashire	635	+5	694	523
Oil & Gas Producers				
BP	427	+1¼	476¼	331¾
Cairn Energy	183	-1	331½	183
Enquest	10½	+¼	16½	9¾
Gulf Keystone Pet.	173½	-¾	224½	140½
Harbour Energy	197	+1¼	294	151¼
Shell	2706	+8	2931½	2291½
Soco International	19#	-¼	27½	18
Tullow Oil	6	+½	24½	4
Oil Equipment, Services & Distribution				
Hunting.	363	+1½	396	246½
John Wood Group	23½	-¼	72½	17¼
Personal Goods				
Burberry Group	1259	+6½	1371½	627¾
PZ Cussons	71	-3½	88¼	66
Unilever.	4860	+22	6177½	4793½
Pharmaceuticals & Biotechnology				
AstraZeneca	13748	+74	14148	9667
Genus.	2590	+35	2715	1424
GlaxoSmithKline	1823#	+17½	1833½	1264
Haleon	373	+¾	415¼	326½
Hikma.	1536	+3	2340	1507
Ovoca Gold	1¼			
Oxford Biomedica	617	+13	682	232½
Real Estate Investment & Services				
Boot (Henry)	225	+4	237	196
Cardiff Property.	2700		2700	2450
CLS Holdings	60	-1	80½	53½
Foxtons	58		69	52¼
Harworth Group	166½	+3	189½	158½
Mountview Est.	8925		10200	8600
Panther Secs.	290		325	280
Rightmove.	515½	+¼	823¾	512
Savills	1004	+9	1110	871
Wynnstay Props.	870		870	680
Real Estate Investment Trusts				
Big Yellow Group	1038	+14	1180	848
British Land	398¾#	+6½	420½	321¼
Capital & Counties	144		161¼	113½
Derwent London	1715	+19	2096	1608
Grainger	181¾	+1½	228	177½
Great Portland Est.	317#	+4	363	262
Hammerson	326	+5	328	220½
Helical Bar	189¾#	-2¾	240	171¾
Land Securities	620#	+12½	650	499½
London & Stamford Prop	188¼#	+1¾	204½	170½
Primary Health.	98	+¾	103½	86¼
SEGRO	713¾	+8¼	732¼	599
Town Centre	131#	+4	149	117
Unite Group	554	+6½	879½	510
Value & Income	207#	+3½	215	173
Workspace Group	394	+2	495	362
Software & Computer Services				
Computacenter	2932	+20	3064	2024
Intec Telecom				
Microgen	289	-1	344	255
Moneysupermarket	184½	+1	221½	180½
Pendragon	356½	+1	558	296
RELX	3049	+24	4135	2972
Sage Group	1080	+½	1348	1063
Triad Group	260#		400	240
Support Services				
Ashtead Group	5146	-38	5538	3659
Capita Group	401	+5	404	175
DCC	4690	-20	5600	4528
Diploma	5310	-15	5650	3624
Essentra.	97¼	+1	133	89¾
Experian Group	3431	+44	4088	3091
Ferguson.	16830	+40	19470	11670
Hays	56	+1¾	88¼	52
Intertek Group	4656	-2	5385	4064
Johnson Service	136¼	+1¼	159½	122¾
London Security	2750		3800	2750
Macfarlane Group	70	-2½	120½	62¾
Mears Group	363	+½	417½	311½
Michael Page	233	+6½	343½	219½
Mitie Group	167½	+½	169¼	106½
Norish.	18½		18¾	14
Paypoint	472½	+2½	853	438½
Rentokil Initial	442½	+½	448½	309½
Robert Walters	138	+4½	333	116
RS Group.	625½#		684	487¼
Serco Group	276½	+1¾	278½	147
SIG	10	+¼	18	8½
Smiths News.	76	+2	77	47½
Speedy Hire.	25#	+½	32¼	18
SThree	189½	+3½	296	137½
Travis Perkins	634½	-1	729	494
Trifast	70½	+1½	87½	59
Vitec Group	13¾	-¼	155	13
Technology Hardware & Equipment				
BATM Advanced	16¼	-¼	19¾	13
Tobacco				
British Amer.Tob	4170#	-45	4421	2875
Imperial Brands	3108#	-18	3312	2551
Travel & Leisure				
888 Holdings	22	+¾	74	20½
Carnival	2235	-78	2358	1134
Celtic.	193	+2½	195	142½
Compass Group	2363	-7	2843	2319
Domino's Pizza.	171¾		315	167¼
EasyJet	505¾	-3¾	587¾	427½
Entain.	757¾	+7¼	1022	501¼
Flutter Entert.	16075	+10	23630	14670
Fuller Smith & Turner	720#	+2	727¼	508
Heavitree	220		280	200
InterContinental Htl	10365	-145	10880	7424
Intl Consolidated Airlines	413¾	-2¼	427½	224½
Irish Continental Uts	542½	-17½	560	380
Marston's	59		62¼	33¼
Mitchells & Butlers	263½	+3½	291½	208½
National Express	23	-1½	80½	21
Rank Group	99¾	-1	160½	77¾
Saga	392	+8½	397	111½
Wetherspoon (JD)	730	-2½	804	541
Whitbread	2542	-8	3274	2335
AIM				
Alumasc Group	240		395	232
Arbuthnot Banking	890	+7½	1100	837½
Boohoo	20¼	-¼	33¾	10½
Camellia	5050	+45	6050	4090
Churchill China	340		725	330
CML Microsystems.	300		335	210
Colefax Group	950		955	750
CPP Group	74¼	-¼	162	68½
Cropper (James)	325		345	132½
Falkland Islands	240		316¾	162½
Fevertree Drinks	812	-4	998	611½
Filtronic	167	+9½	170	74¾
James Halstead	138		181½	133
Mothercare	2½		4¼	2¼
Mpac Group	305	-2½	586	270
Naked Wine.	71½	-½	93½	43
Nichols.	958	-6	1465	930
Northamber	32½		34	26
Portmeirion.	97½		189	97½
Regal Petroleum	17½	+1	26½	14½
Rockhopper Exploratn	69	-3	87¾	23¼
Ten Alps	48½		73	48
Titon Holdings	92½		95	69
Volex.	414#	+½	428½	198¾
Young & Co Brewery A.	746	+6	992	714

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Letters

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Labour's early release scheme is beyond a joke

THE knowledge that figures show more than 8,000 criminals were freed to enjoy Christmas at home thanks to Labour's early release plan, reminded me of the comedy Porridge, except this isn't funny.

Crime in this country is escalating at an alarming level and surely instead of releasing criminals who have not served their full sentences, new prisons should be built as a urgently to house these inmates.

During Covid it was amazing the speed the Nightingale hospitals were constructed to handle massive influxes of patients needing intensive care when traditional hospitals faced being overwhelmed – surely the building of new prisons warrants the same level of urgency.

Julie Foster,
Burnley, Lancs

Chickens coming home to roost as inmates set free

THE Daily Express front page headline about the early release of prisoners, came as no surprise to me after spending 32 years in the Prison Service as my career.

This has happened for decades, unnoticed by the public, but the media has lately been reporting it.

The root of the problem is that no political party has put penal policy in its manifestos at General Elections because they saw no votes in it. Now the chickens have come home to roost.

David Fleming,
Downham Market, Norfolk

Why are some arrested while others are bailed?

WHAT sort of a country do we live in, when five men accused of rape in Swindon are released on bail, while young people opposing genocide in Gaza can be held for many months in prison without trial, after being denied bail?

We need to do some soul-searching, when our British police have now sunk to arresting Greta Thunberg, peacefully protesting in London for the hunger strikers.

Anne Watson,
Truro

Of course tax and spend Reeves won't be changing

RACHEL Reeves has been told she must change course. This is unlikely. The whole socialist left, not just Labour, is driven by envy, greed and hate, is economically illiterate, and wedded to tax and spend.

U-turns have occurred on policies deemed by 2TK as "the right thing to do" but 6,200 farms plus many other businesses have already been destroyed. Ed Millibrain's Net Zero now means we import over 40% of our electricity from Europe but no lessons are learned. Keir Starmer now plans to tie us into the EU's plan giving total control to Brussels.

Dr Peter Outen,
Brentwood, Essex

Rachel's given such little thought to stock answer

ISN'T it strange how now Rachel Reeves has started chasing all the high earners, and millionaires etc out of the country, she's trying to encourage "the little people" to invest in stocks and shares.

We maybe the little people, but we are not all brain dead and stupid.

My money is OK where it is Ms Reeves and you will never convince me otherwise.

Deborah Wisdom,
Canterbury, Kent

Rights have to go hand in hand with responsibilities

LORD Lilley is right to say that the European Convention of Human Rights will never be fit for purpose.

Almost every day we see unvetted migrants entering the country illegally, claiming their right to asylum at the expense of the rights of those who apply legally.

And activists exercising their human right to protest by blocking thoroughfares and preventing motorists from their rights in getting to work or attend hospital appointments. All the while cities are being brought to a halt by weekly pro-Palestine marchers, threatening the right to safety of thousands of Jews in the country.

Rights must go hand in hand with responsibilities.

Roy Daniels,
Luton, Beds

LETTER OF THE DAY

Doctor should have to pay if he can prove his case

Doctor's fine mess can be easily sorted

WHY does Dr Nick Lagattolla think that just because he's a doctor, he shouldn't have to provide proof he was "saving a woman's life" to avoid paying a parking fine?

One has to ask, if the woman was in such a situation her life was in immediate danger, why wasn't an ambulance quickly on site in such an emergency? What were the ambulance responders doing that he needed to remain with the woman for three hours?

I'm sure there will be plenty of people who were in the bank during those hours, and the lady herself who will quite simply be able to provide the proof requested. Call me a cynic but after reading the account of his battle against the fine, I too would ask for proof.

Angela Couling,
Ashford, Kent

Chancellor's Budget still throttling the high street

I'M READING a lot in the newspapers with consternation about the closure of restaurants, pubs and even gift shops because of rising costs, namely minimum wage rates and higher national insurance contributions.

Worst of all, I've just read about workers devastated by a charity organisation that helped struggling families in Partington closing down because to Labour's Budget.

Soon only the very rich will be able to afford to shop for anything other than the basics, and many of them are leaving the country.

Bill Tait,
Leigh, Gtr Manchester

Don't turn on, don't tune in, it's time to drop out

WE HAVE been told for years by the BBC how much they are loved as a British institution.

Well as the British public have shown by choosing not to watch it over Christmas how in these times of financial hardship can they continue to justify fleecing us out of £174.50 a year for something we have no wish to watch?

John Kennedy,
Hornchurch, Essex

Oiling wheels of Trump's agenda against Venezuela

MOTORISTS have been dealt a fresh blow as oil prices rise due to the tensions over Venezuela.

Unsurprisingly, the US has a controlling grip of world oil prices. That is why Trump wants the UK to drill for more oil, to line the pockets of the US-backed oil companies.

So when Nigel Farage and the Tories ask for more drilling, so the UK can have cheaper fuel, it's a lie as it just feeds the same companies.

The UK's never had cheap fuel, even with North Sea supplies.

Donald Trump's little war with Venezuela is about them supplying cheap oil and not complying with the US and Dirty Don's price scam.

Andrew Nutt,
Bargoed, Caerphilly

Brave Bardot challenged intelligentsia sensibilities

THE late actress Brigitte Bardot held, and openly shared, opinions that didn't sit well with the left-wing intelligentsia's sensibilities, for which she was ostracised and cancelled. If only there were any actors of such honesty today. She deserved better. Shame on the left.

Stefan Badham,
Portsmouth

BRITAIN IS NOT THE SAFE HAVEN MIGRANTS THINK IT IS

THE CONTROVERSY over illegal migrants crossing over the Channel from France, which is in itself a safe country, then entering into Britain under the guise that they are fleeing war or persecution continues unabated.

Considering the current situation here in Britain, with attempted terrorist attacks, knife crime escalating and the acceptance of migrants from unknown backgrounds and many known undesirables, can it actually still be maintained that the United Kingdom is a safe country to live in?

Anthony Richardson,
Stirling

TODAY: Monday December 30, 2025

ON THIS DAY

Daily Express
RAF NIGHT FIGHTERS CHASE FIRE RAIDERS FROM SKY
Waves of Nazis above incendiaries on London
Hitler will not win, Roosevelt says

85 years ago (1940)
We told how wartime London suffered one of the "most intensive night raids" of the Blitz as the Luftwaffe dropped 24,000 high explosives and 100,000 bombs on the capital.

In what was known as the Second Great Fire of London, St Paul's Cathedral was hit, while firefighters and volunteers battled to put out thousands of fires. They were hampered by a shortage of water, due to an unusually low tide on the Thames and a burst water main.

103 years ago (1922)
The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was proclaimed at Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre.

The four founding republics included Russia, Transcaucasia (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia), Ukraine and Belorussia. There were 15 republics in total by the time the USSR was dissolved in 1991.

39 years ago (1986)
More than 200 canaries used by the mining industry were to be phased out and replaced with carbon monoxide detectors.

The birds had been used by miners since the 1890s because they reacted even if only minute quantities of the gases were present.

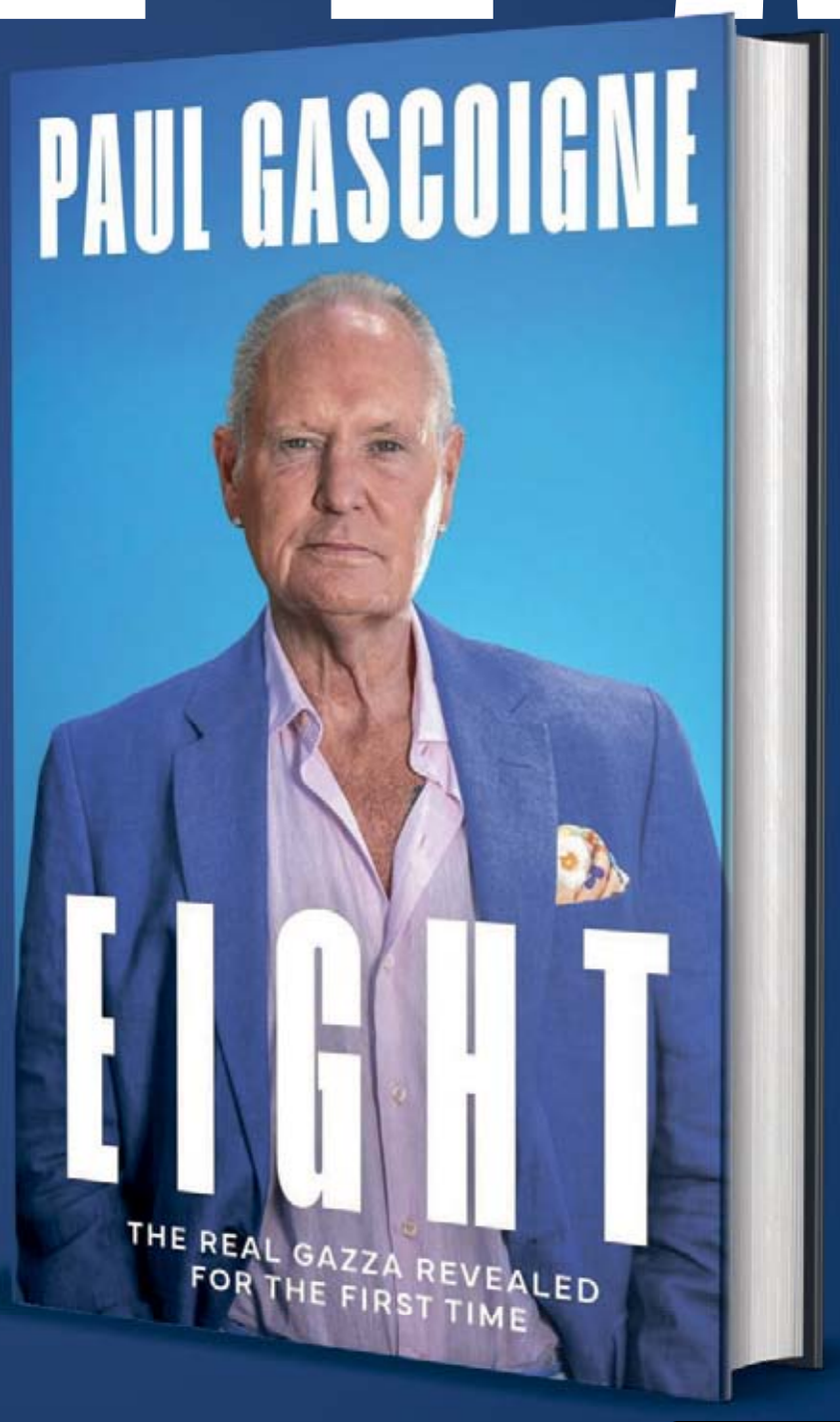
BIRTHDAYS

Singer **Ellie Goulding** is 39. She sang at the Prince and Princess of Wales's wedding. Golfer **Tiger Woods** is 50. His net worth is around £1billion. Musician **Patti Smith** is 79. Bruce Springsteen co-wrote her 1978 hit Because The Night. ELO's **Jeff Lynne** is 78. He was in The Traveling Wilburys with George Harrison.

TODAY'S GIGGLE
witty one linere here and punchlie below pver one ot two lines, thanks

GAZZA

THE REAL PAUL GASCOIGNE REVEALED FOR THE FIRST TIME



“For the first time, I feel ready to write all about the sort of life I’ve had, so people get to know the real me, not the Gazza in the papers.”

AMAZON

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Racing

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MOUTH ALMIGHTY

Lossie ends Leopardstown Grade One jinx

By **Melissa Jones**

LOSSIEMOUTH broke her Grade One Leopardstown hoodoo with a determined effort in the December Hurdle.

The six-year-old was bizarrely spooked by a flock of seagulls when she fell in the Irish Champion Hurdle in February, leaving stablemate State Man with a simple task.

And in 2023, the then juvenile jumper was beaten at odds of just 1-3f when she ran out of room and had too much ground to make up.

But yesterday's two-mile race was much more straightforward, as she passed fellow Willie Mullins trainee Anzadam on the home turn and held the late challenge of fellow mare Brighterdaysahead. "That's nine Grade Ones which is extraordinary," said Mullins. "She's becoming a bit of a legend in her own right."

Lossiemouth is a 7-2 chance with William Hill for the Champion Hurdle at Cheltenham in March – and jockey Paul Townend feels she deserves a crack at it having impressed against her own sex at the previous two Festivals.

"You'd be a brave man to say she couldn't win it," he said. "I thought I was in front plenty soon enough there.

"When Lossie felt the other horse coming she was always pulling out enough to keep her head in front."

❒ NO DRAMA THIS END will defend an unbeaten jumping record at Prestbury Park after landing the Coral Challow Novices' Hurdle at Newbury – his first Grade One.

Paddy Power and Sky Bet trimmed him to 7-2 favourite (from 5-1) for the Turners Novices' Hurdle in March and jockey Harry Cobden said: "A fast-run two-and-a-half-mile novice (at the Festival) would really suit him."

GREY-T EFFORT: Lossiemouth (left) holds off Brighterdayshead at Leopardstown

Hardstyle can find the winning rhythm

By **The Scout** (Melissa Jones)

HARDSTYLE (7.00, Nap) can make some noise on his handicap debut in the Bet 10 Get 40 With BetMGM Nursery at Wolverhampton.

George Boughey's juvenile trainee finished off his race nicely over five furlongs last time, on his final qualifying run for a mark.

Significantly up in trip to a mile, Blue Point's son has the assistance of Billy Loughnane, above, who is on course to set a new best calender year record for winners.

At Haydock, PADDY O'MAHLER (2.05, nb) is tipped to make it two wins on the trot in the 3m 1½f novices' handicap chase.

Prior to that the seven-year-old bumped into a pair of improvers, and a 5lb rise from the assessor looks to be within range.

Back on a sound surface, BORDER GEM (3.55, trb) is a must for the shortlist in Taunton's Musgrove Park Hospital Conditional Jockeys' Training Series Handicap Hurdle.

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12.35 CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS' HCAP HURDLE
£5,281 (Class 4) 3m 58yds (7 declared)

1 U47-28P **INIS OIRR (8) (D) (T)** L Russell & M Scudamore 8 12-1 **Conner McCann(6)** –
2 123-411 **NAZARE (35) (S)** James Owen 5 11-12 **A Chadwick** 110
3 853135 **KISS MY FACE (41) (D)** A Ralph 8 11-10 **J A Anderson** 113
4 233-85L **GUCHEN (23)** K Bailey & M Nicholls 5 11-6 **Aamilah Aswat(10)** ★115
5 1/222-33 **DOUGLAS HYDE (39)** R Curtis 5 11-4 **J Brace** 111
6 430-LLL ● **CLONDAW ROYALE (181) (C&D)** J & A O'Neill 6 10-12 **B Macey(6)** 90
7 1534-62 **MAURA JEANNE (53) (D) (T)** I Duncan 8 10-8 **A Doyle** 114

VISOR: No. 3 TONGUE STRAP: No. 7
CHEEK PIECES: No. 1.

SP FORECAST: 6-5 Nazare, 5 Douglas Hyde, 6 Maura Jeanne, 7 Inis Oirr, 8 Guchen, 10 Kiss My Face, 16 Clondaw Royale.
2024: Clondaw Royale 5-11-3, Benjamin Macey(10) 11-4 (J & A O'Neill), 8 ran.

1.05 EBF 'NATIONAL HUNT' NOVICES' HURDLE
£6,535 (3) 1m 7f 144yds (11)

1 43F-21 **BRIXSON (34)** J Parkinson & S Smith 5 11-6 **D McMenamin** 123
2 2-112 ● **CAPTAIN HUGO (24) (D) (S)** P Hobbs & J White 5 11-6 **Sean Houlihan** ★134
3 U631 **THE CISTERCIAN (20) (D)** S Edmunds 5 11-6 **C Hammond** 127
4 8 **BOSTON SAVR (16)** J & A O'Neill 4 11-0 **Jonjo O'Neill Jr** 73
5 5-650 **GAELIC GLOW (24)** S England 4 11-0 **C Bewley** 102
6 3-64 **GOLDEN PRINCE (30)** Christian Williams 4 11-0 **J Tudor** 102
7 942-LL **THE EGYPTIAN GINGE (38)** N & W Twiston-Davies 4 11-0 **Mr J Neild(7)** 129
8 154 **TIMMYS JET AWAY (11)** O Greenall & J Guerriero 4 11-0 **T Wynne** 113
9 41-35 **U S MARSHALL (16)** O Greenall & J Guerriero 5 11-0 **Craig Nichol** 110
10 P111/5-2 **WOLF WALKER (20)** C Boultbee-Brooks 6 11-0 **R Patrick** 130
11 246 **MOONLIGHTINTHEPARK (13)** O Greenall & J Guerriero 4 10-7 **C J Todd** 116

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 8, 10
HOOD: Nos. 1, 7, 10, 11.

SP FORECAST: 13-8 Captain Hugo, 10-3 The Cistercian, 9-2 The Egyptian Ginge, 11-2 Wolf Walker, 7 Brixson, 25 Moonlightinthepark, 33 Timmys Jet Away, Golden Prince, U S Marshall, 50 Others.
2024: Laganhill 6-11-0, Stan Sheppard 14-1 (H Daly), 6 ran.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Good. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2020-25):** Danny McMenamin 17% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2020-25):** D Skelton 19% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.05 Moonlightinthepark (hood), 1.35 Bois Guillbert (cheek pieces), Ned Tanner (wind surgery), 2.35 Playful Fox (tongue strap, wind surgery), 3.05 Regal Blue (wind surgery), 3.40 Bucephalus (cheek pieces, tongue strap). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 1.05 Captain Hugo. 2.05 Ski Lodge(hcp ch). 2.35 Marvel Magic. 3.40 Sun Lady Marine.

THE SCOUT

12.35 Clondaw Royale
1.05 Captain Hugo
1.35 Kahavari
2.05 PADDY O'MAHLER (nb)
2.35 The Grayster
3.05 Jupiter Des Bordes
3.40 Brentford Hope

1.35 BETFRED HANDICAP CHASE (GBB RACE)
£11,618 (3) 2m 3f 203yds (8)

1 L53/F-P6 **LAC DE CONSTANCE (34)** D Skelton 9 12-0 **L Harrison** –
2 F634-1L **GRAIN D'OUDAIRIES (32)** D McCain 9 11-13 **B Hughes** ★133
3 2214-L3 **NED TANNER (24) (C&D)** N Alexander 9 11-6 **Sean Quinlan** 131
4 P6ILL-5 **BOIS GUILLBERT (52) (T)** L Russell & M Scudamore 6 11-6 **P W Wadge** 130
5 1LP-P1P **TARAS HALLS (32) (D)** J Parkinson & S Smith 7 11-5 **D McMenamin** 130
6 0662-P2 **BOWENSPARK (28)** H Daly 7 11-4 **S Twiston-Davies** 132
7 3/441L-L **EPINEPHRINE (40)** V Williams 5 11-3 **C Deutsch** –
8 22U2-UL ● **KAHAVARI (31)** O Greenall & J Guerriero 5 10-12 **Craig Nichol** 99

BLINKERS: No. 5
TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 2, 3
CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 3, 4.
SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 6, 2, 8, 1, 3.

SP FORECAST: 3 Bowenspark, 4 Taras Halls, Lac De Constance, 7 Grain D'oudairies, 8 Bois Guillbert, Ned Tanner, 10 Kahavari, Epinephrine.
2024: Ned Tanner 8-10-10, Danny McMenamin 7-2 (N Alexander), 7 ran.

2.05 BETFRED NOVICES' HANDICAP CHASE
£7,922 (4) 3m 1f 125yds (5)

1 1/6211-3 **SOLE SOLUTION (21)** V Williams 7 12-0 **C Deutsch** 121
2 364-524 **I WISH YOU (42) (T)** L Russell & M Scudamore 5 11-10 **P W Wadge** 121
3 21/71-22 **SKI LODGE (21)** A King 6 11-9 **T Bellamy** 123
4 23/L2-33 **GOLD EMERY (24)** D McCain 9 11-2 **T Gillard** ★125
5 145-221 ● **PADDY O'MAHLER (19) (F)** J Parkinson & S Smith 7 11-0 **D McMenamin** 120

CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 2, 5.
SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 4, 2, 5, 3, 1.

SP FORECAST: 2 Paddy O'Mahler, 3 Ski Lodge, Sole Solution, 6 Gold Emery, I Wish You.
2024: Wal Buck's 5-11-1, Derek Fox 2-1 Fav (L Russell), 6 ran.

LONGEST TRAVELLER: Vanillier (3.05) Ireland; **Inis Oirr** (12.35), **Bois Guillbert** (1.35), **I Wish You** (2.05), **Majordomo** (2.35), **Marvel Magic** (2.35), **Whistle Stop Tour** (3.05) 239 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 3.05 **Egbert** from A King to Christian Williams. 3.40 **Sun Lady Marine** from D Bressou in France to Paula Smith.

2.35 EBF JUNIOR 'NAT HUNT' HURDLE 3YO
£4,901 (4) 1m 7f 144yds (7)

1 2L **DIAMOND JIM (24)** O Greenall & J Guerriero 11-0. **Craig Nichol** ★109
2 21 **LUCY THE WIRE (30) (D)** James Owen 11-0 **J J Burke** 105
3 1 **MAJORDOMO (46) (T)** L Russell & M Scudamore 11-0. **Jack Power(5)** –
4 4 **MARVEL MAGIC (46) (T)** L Russell & M Scudamore 11-0 **P W Wadge** –
5 4 **PIPPIN'S LEGEND (38)** C Longsdon 11-0 **D Bass** –
6 3 **PLAYFUL FOX (48)** D Skelton 11-0 **T Durrell** 93
7 2 ● **THE GRAYSTER (32)** Dr R Newland & J Insole 11-0 **L Scott(3)** 102

TONGUE STRAP: No. 6.

SP FORECAST: 2 Lucy The Wire, 3 Majordomo, 11-2 Diamond Jim, 6 Marvel Magic, 15-2 The Grayster, 10 Pippin's Legend, 14 Playful Fox.
2024: Itstonitejosephine 10-7, Nico De Boinville 3-1 (N Henderson), 6 ran.

3.05 BETFRED LAST FLING HANDICAP CHASE
£13,008 (2) 3m 4f 97yds (6)

1 9130-U6 **VANILLIER (37)** G Cromwell (IRE) 10 12-1 **E Staples(5)** 143
2 2P/L1FP- **EGBERT (290) (C)** Christian Williams 8 10-13 **J Tudor** –
3 5P5-L25 **WHISTLE STOP TOUR (38) (T)** L Russell & M Scudamore 7 10-10 **Jack Power(5)** 141
4 P1P1/PP- **REGAL BLUE (374) (C)** J & A O'Neill 8 10-10 **Jonjo O'Neill Jr** –
5 L1-2233 **WA WA (38)** O Murphy 10 10-2 **B Hughes** ★145
6 3342-31 ● **JUPITER DES BORDES (19)** R Hobson 6 10-2 **C Maggs(5)** 141

BLINKERS: No. 1 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 1, 5, 6
CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 2, 3, 5.
SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 2, 6, 4, 1, 3.

SP FORECAST: 3 Wa Wa, 7-2 Jupiter Des Bordes, 9-2 Vanillier, 5 Egbert, Whistle Stop Tour, 6 Regal Blue.
2024: Saint Xavier 12-10-6, Charlie Maggs(5) 9-1 (R Hobson), 7 ran.

3.40 BETFRED HANDICAP HURDLE
£10,562 (3) 1m 7f 144yds (8)

1 2L-84L6 ● **BRENTFORD HOPE (18) (C&D)** Harry Derham 8 12-0 **M Fox(7)** 137
2 F211-L4 **BUCEPHALUS (18) (D)** N Mulholland 8 11-9 **Harriet Tucker(7)** ★138
3 1114-4P **SERIOUS CHALLENGE (44) (D)** F O'Brien 5 11-6 **J J Burke** 135
4 U1190/4- **GEROMINO (592) (D)** D McCain 9 11-4 **W Maggs(5)** –
5 414-U **COL DU PRE' (31)** V Williams 4 11-2 **C Deutsch** –
6 2-00L6L **STONER'S CHOICE (18) (D)** F O'Brien 10 11-2 **Fern O'Brien(5)** 130
7 8-L40L5 **RAUZAN (30) (D)** Lizzie Quinlan 5 10-10 **Sean Quinlan** 136
8 55P8-32 **SUN LADY MARINE (218)** Paula Smith 4 10-10 **C Maggs(5)** –

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 2, 4, 6
CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 2, 7.

SP FORECAST: 9-4 Serious Challenge, 7-2 Brentford Hope, 6 Col Du Pre', Stoner's Choice, Geromino, 12 Sun Lady Marine, 14 Rauzan, Bucephalus.
2024: For Pleasure 9-11-7, Sean Bowen 9-2 (O Murphy), 5 ran.

KELSO: Good to soft-soft in places

11.45—THE FOUR SIXES (Mr J King, 1-6 fav) 1; Aeros Luck (9-2 2nd fav) 2; Chumlee (25-1) 3. 3 ran. 16l, 20l. (O Murphy). Tote: £1.17; exacta: £1.10. trifecta: £1.30. CSF: £1.47.

12.19—GOLDEN POINT (Mr N Orpwood, 2-1 fav) 1; Blakey Boy (7-2) 2; Court At Slip (11-2) 3. H'cap 6 ran. 8l, 12l. (L Russell & M Scudamore). Tote: £3.00; pl £1.60, £1.90. exacta: £10.70. trifecta: £38.30. CSF: £9.96.

12.54—COUNTRY CODE (D McMenamin, 5-4 fav) 1; Burncourt Boy (9-2) 2; Tashkhan (7-2 2nd fav) 3. 7 ran. 5½l, ns. (Ruth Jefferson). Tote: £2.25; pl £1.40, £2.40. exacta: £7.70. trifecta: £21.70. CSF: £7.94. Non-runner: Am I Bovvered.

1.29—THEY WANT ME (T Gillard, 5-2 2nd fav) 1; They're Chancers (11-10 fav) 2; Lance Les Des (15-2) 3. 11 ran. 1¼l, 4¼l. (D McCain). Tote: £3.50; pl £1.30, £1.20, £1.70. exacta: £6.50. trifecta: £27.00. CSF: £6.16.

2.04—CAVALIER DU LUY (B Lynn, 10-11 fav) 1; Quercus Robur (13-2) 2; Another High Five (9-1) 3. 10 ran. 2l, 9¼l. (N Alexander). Tote: £1.91; pl £1.10, £1.70, £2.50. exacta: £9.20. trifecta: £36.40. CSF: £8.45.

2.39—SPEIRIUIL (R Mania, 2-1 fav) 1; Tread Softly Now (13-2) 2; Lowlands (7-2) 3. H'cap 9 ran. hd, 6½l. (A Nicol). Tote: £3.00; pl £1.30, £2.20, £1.60. exacta: £16.20. tricast: £43.90. trifecta: £74.90. CSF: £15.32.

3.15—BOTH BARRELS (Sean Quinlan, 8-1) 1; Magic Wave (13-2 2nd fav) 2; Esprit Du Potier (15-2) 3. H'cap 7 ran. 1½l, 3l. (D Whillans; 4-7 fav Baratablet). Tote: £9.00; pl £2.20, £2.50. exacta: £46.70. trifecta: £184.30. CSF: £54.85.

Placepot: £7.30
(Race 1) 2; (2) 2, 5; (3) 1, 4; (4) 10, 9, 5; (5) 2, 6, 1; (6) 2, 7, 4;
Quadpot: £3.20

DONCASTER: Good-good to soft in places

11.50—BLUE LAS (D Johnston, 11-10 2nd fav) 1; Maximilian (4-6 fav) 2; 2 ran. 1l. (N Mulholland). Tote: £2.10; Non-runner: Lunar Discovery.

12.25—MADE U BLUSH (B Hughes, 2-1 2nd fav) 1; Laysoft (11-8 fav) 2; Penn Avenue (7-1) 3. 7 ran. 10l, 3l. (D Skelton). Tote: £3.00; pl £1.70, £1.50. exacta: £7.10. trifecta: £20.60. CSF: £5.41. Non-runner: Rosso Levanto.

1.00—GET ON GEORGE (C Bewley, 15-2) 1; Draco Malfoy (9-4) 2; Tiddesley Wood (2-1 2nd fav) 3. 7 ran. 2l, 7l. (J Parkinson & S Smith; 7-4 fav Doctor Blue). Tote: £8.50; pl £2.20, £2.20. exacta: £29.50. trifecta: £78.90. CSF: £25.78. Non-runner: Jackpot Cauveliere.

1.35—SOME SCOPE (C Maggs, 5-1) 1; Ki Woo (8-1) 2; Moroder (28-1) 3. H'cap 7 ran. 3l, 9l. (R Hobson; 5-4 fav Fierce Warrior). Tote: £7.30; pl £3.00, £3.00. exacta: £39.30. trifecta: £258.10. CSF: £42.74.

2.10—SPINDLEBERRY (D Mullins, 6-5 fav) 1; Telepathique (5-1) 2; Paggane (5-2 2nd fav) 3. 5 ran. 6½l, 2l. (W P Mullins (IRE)). Tote: £2.20; pl £1.20, £2.90. exacta: £7.70. trifecta: £13.50. CSF: £7.57.

2.45—STONE'S THROW (J Bowen, 3-1) 1; Bugise Seagull (18-5) 2; Rockola Vogue (5-2 2nd fav) 3. H'cap 5 ran. 7½l, 4½l. (Billy Aprahamian; 2-1 fav J J Moon). Tote: £4.00; pl £1.90, £1.80. exacta: £11.60. trifecta: £30.20. CSF: £13.98. Non-runner: Spike Jones.

3.20—LIGHT FANDANGO (C O'Farrell, 11-1) 1; Callin Baton Rouge (10-1) 2; Paddys Policy (11-4 2nd fav) 3. H'cap 10 ran. 1¾l, 4½l. (N Mulholland; 5-2 fav Park Talk). Tote: £12.00; pl £2.70, £3.10, £1.80. exacta: £75.80. tricast: £392.79. trifecta: £394.60. CSF: £113.12. Non-runner: Queen Roslyn.

Placepot: £147.40
(Race 1) 2; (2) 4, 3; (3) 3, 2; (4) 4, 5; (5) 3, 4; (6) 6, 1;
Quadpot: £50.20

NEWBURY: Good-good to soft in places

12.05—WHITE NOISE (T Bellamy, 4-1 2nd fav) 1; Graecia (9-2) 2; Tour Ovalie (6-1) 3. H'cap 8 ran. 5l, 4¼l. (K Bailey & M Nicholls; 3-1 fav Rula Bula). Tote: £5.00; pl £1.80, £1.60, £2.00. exacta: £19.50. tricast: £106.37. trifecta: £127.30. CSF: £22.86.

12.40—MINELLA YOGA (H Cobden, 16-5 2nd fav) 1; Act Of Innocence (2-7 fav) 2; Blues Singer (17-2) 3. 8 ran. ¾l, 12l. (P Nicholls). Tote: £4.90; pl £1.10, £1.10, £1.30. exacta: £5.60. trifecta: £10.00. CSF: £5.10.

1.15—OLD COWBOY (F Mitchell, 9-4 fav) 1; Pleasington (4-1) 2; Rath Gaul Hill (7-1) 3. H'cap 6 ran. 4l, 5½l. (G & J Moore). Tote: £3.25; pl £1.70, £2.00. exacta: £11.30. trifecta: £37.70. CSF: £11.52.

1.50—KING'S THRESHOLD (B R Jones, 9-4 jt fav) 1; Ideal Des Bordes (7-1) 2; Rivers Corner (9-4 jt fav) 3. H'cap 6 ran. 3¼l, nk. (E Lavelle). Tote: £3.25; pl £1.60, £3.00. exacta: £16.60. tricast: £36.56. trifecta: £37.20. CSF: £17.08. Non-runners: Brave Kingdom, Gericault Roque, Minella Blueway.

2.22—ANDASHAN (F Gordon, 4-1 2nd fav) 1; I'm A Lumberjack (5-1) 2; Peacenik (5-1) 3. H'cap 12 ran. 2¼l, 2l. (C Gordon; 10-3 fav Doctors Hill). Tote: £5.00; pl £2.00, £1.90, £2.10. exacta: £25.60. tricast: £106.59. trifecta: £128.10. CSF: £25.92. Non-runners: Kalium, Meatloaf, Scorpio Rising.

3.00—NO DRAMA THIS END (H Cobden, 4-9 fav) 1; Klimt Madrik (9-1) 2; Tiptoptim (12-1) 3. 6 ran. 1¼l, ns. (P Nicholls). Tote: £1.45; pl £1.20, £3.00. exacta: £4.90. tricast: £22.27. trifecta: £18.60. CSF: £5.73. Non-runners: Destination Dubai, Giantsgrave, Starzand.

3.35—CALIMYSTIC (N De Boinville, 13-2) 1; Captain Bellamy (9-4 jt fav) 2; Pounding Poet (28-1) 3. H'cap 8 ran. shd, 5l. (N Henderson; 9-4 jtfav Newton Tornado). Tote: £7.50; pl £2.10, £1.30, £4.90. exacta: £25.80. tricast: £387.31. trifecta: £264.90. CSF: £22.83.

Jackpot: £3,881.70
Placepot: £16.90
(Race 1) 4, 8, 5; (2) 8, 1, 2; (3) 5, 1; (4) 2, 9; (5) 5, 9, 4; (6) 7, 5;
Quadpot: £8.20

NEWCASTLE: Standard

3.10—DAMASCUS STEEL (T Eaves, 17-2) 1; Alfred Spero (9-1) 2; Royal Blaze (13-2) 3. H'cap 9 ran. 4¼l, shd. (D P Quinn; 4-1 fav Prince Quattro). Tote: £12.00; pl £2.70, £2.80, £2.10. exacta: £127.90. tricast: £534.87. trifecta: £812.80. CSF: £83.69. Non-runner: Molinari.

3.45—EXTREMELY ZAIN (C Fallon, 5-2 2nd fav) 1; Starryfield (10-11 fav) 2; Space Moon (66-1) 3. 10 ran. 7l, 1½l. (W Haggas). Tote: £3.50; pl £1.10, £1.20, £18.10. exacta: £7.20. trifecta: £128.10. CSF: £5.39. Non-runner: Skewsby.

4.15—DAGGER STRIKE (H Doyle, 4-5 fav) 1; Popty Ping (4-1) 2; Henriette Ronner (10-3 2nd fav) 3. H'cap 5 ran. 4l, 1½l. (A Watson). Tote: £1.80; pl £1.20, £1.70. exacta: £5.40. trifecta: £11.80. CSF: £4.42.

4.45—GRESSINGTON (D Keenan, 9-1) 1; Towerlands (15-8 fav) 2; Bobby Joe Leg (12-1) 3. H'cap 6 ran. 2l, ¾l. (K Scott). Tote: £12.50; pl £4.30, £1.50. exacta: £31.20. trifecta: £226.00. CSF: £26.42. Non-runner: Al Muqdad.

5.15—BRIGHT (B Loughnane, 10-3 fav) 1; Monsieur Kodi (9-2) 2; Maxi Boy (17-2) 3. H'cap 10 ran. 1¼l, 1l. (M Loughnane). Tote: £4.50; pl £1.60, £1.60, £3.00. exacta: £25.90. tricast: £120.56. trifecta: £166.70. CSF: £19.39.

5.45—SECOND FIDDLE (M Tabti, 11-2) 1; Maui Breeze (80-1) 2; Francesi (3-1 fav) 3. H'cap 12 ran. 2l, nk. (I Jardine). Tote: £6.50; pl £2.90, £18.10, £1.60. exacta: £353.90. tricast: £1613.28. trifecta: £3240.80. CSF: £411.79. Non-runner: Luminous Warrior.

6.15—MAPLEDURHAM (K Shoemark, 5-2 fav) 1; Instant Bond (3-1 2nd fav) 2; Elettaria (22-1) 3. H'cap 9 ran. ¾l, nk. (E Walker). Tote: £3.50; pl £1.50, £1.30, £2.90. exacta: £9.60. tricast: £132.64. trifecta: £143.70. CSF: £10.21.

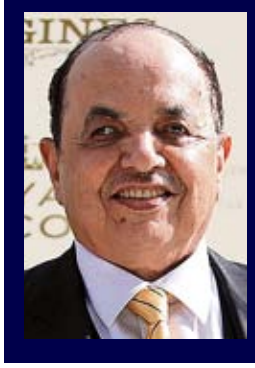
6.45—WYVERN (D Nolan, 11-4 fav) 1; Little Ted (9-2) 2; Ana Emaraaty (9-2) 3. H'cap 9 ran. shd, ½l. (P Morris). Tote: £3.75; pl £1.50, £1.70, £1.90. exacta: £18.40. tricast: £54.11. trifecta: £76.70. CSF: £15.78.

7.15—GOLDMOYNE (C Fallon, 9-4 fav) 1; Mayo County (10-1) 2; Yorkshire Glory (11-4 2nd fav) 3. H'cap 9 ran. 1¼l, 3l. (James Owen). Tote: £3.25; pl £1.40, £2.10, £1.30. exacta: £32.40. tricast: £65.94. trifecta: £68.70. CSF: £25.99.

Placepot: £77.20
(Race 1) 4, 10, 5; (2) 1, 4, 10; (3) 1, 4; (4) 5, 2; (5) 5, 7, 6; (6) 7, 2, 8;
Quadpot: £8.50

UK RESULTS

DEATH OF DERBY-WINNING OWNER



FLAT racing is mourning the passing of leading racehorse owner and breeder Sheikh Mohammed Obaid Al Maktoum.

The member of the ruling family of Dubai had his yellow and black spotted silks carried to numerous Group One victories over the past three decades, including 1998 Derby winner High-Rise.

Others included Rosallion, the Irish 2,000 Guineas and St James's Palace Stakes hero of 2024 and Inisherin,

By **Melissa Jones**

who also starred at Royal Ascot that year in the Commonwealth Cup.

The cousin of Sheikh Mohammed – the ruler of Dubai and founder of Godolphin – also won numerous trophies internationally.

His Without A Fight landed the 2023 Melbourne Cup at Flemington, while Sheikh Mohammed Obaid's (left) final Group race honours were achieved by the Karl Burke-trained

Royal Champion in last month's Bahrain International Trophy.

And the top-class stallion Dubawi, a flagbearer for the worldwide Godolphin operation, was bred from his Classic-winning filly Zomaradah.

The Sheikh also had horses with Richard Hannon, Kevin Ryan and George Boughey – with the latter stabling Bow Echo, one of the favourites for next year's 2,000 Guineas.

TAUNTON RACINGTV

12.50 JUVENILE HURDLE (GBB RACE) 3YO
£4,955 (Class 4) 2m 104yds (11 declared)

1		BELLATOR BULLET (F143) D Skelton 11-0	H Skelton	–
2	65	BOUQUET DE PARIS (26) R Curtis 11-0	B R Jones	★104
3	57	ENZIYA (25) K Pickard 11-0	R Corcoran(7)	103
4		GOLDEN GARDEN (F110) W Greatrex 11-0	J Bowen	–
5	43	● INNAMORATO (125) P Nicholls 11-0	H Cobden	–
6		LAMLASH (F76) J Tickle 11-0	C Pritchard(3)	–
7	P	LAUNCESTON (22) Joe Ponting 11-0	R Dingle	–
8	5-7F19	MADAME DE LABRUNIE (32) F O'Brien 11-0	J Hogan	75
9		MY KINDA GHAIY (F81) O Murphy 11-0	S Bowen	–
10		TA CRAIC ANN (F118) J S Moore 11-0	J M Davies	–
11		WERTPOL (F71) Harry Derham 11-0	Paul O'Brien	–

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 3, 4, 8
CHEEK PIECES: No. 3
HOOD: No. 2.

SP FORECAST: 5-2 Bellator Bullet, 7-2 Innamorato, 5 My Kinda Ghaiy, 6 Golden Garden, 13-2 Wertpol, 10 Madame De Labrunie, 12 Bouquet De Paris, 16 Enziya, 50 Others.
2024: Moutarde 11-7, Callum Pritchard(7) 5-4 Fav (Anthony Charlton), 9 ran.

1.20 BOYLE SPORTS NOVICES' HURDLE
£4,955 (4) 2m 3f 1yds (14)

1	1-21	● KNOCK OFF SOXS (19) (C) K Woollacott 4 11-7	H Cobden	116
2	2-21	LE BEAU MADRIK (31) D Skelton 4 11-7	H Skelton	★122
3	4/522-U7	BLAZING LITTEN (12) C Down 7 11-0	B Carver	69
4	8F	BUSHSTREET BOWMAN (35) B Pauling 5 11-0	B R Jones	–
5	7	BYE BYE SALAM (19) J Scott 4 11-0	L Williams	102
6	P2-64	CRYSTELLO (17) Harry Derham 4 11-0	H Reed	108
7	6	GETTINGAWAYWITHIT (29) N Mulholland 5 11-0	B Harris(3)	–
8	9	HADRIANUS (14) J Tizzard 5 11-0	B J Powell	87
9	5-	KISS GOLD (253) P Hobbs & J White 5 11-0	C Pritchard(3)	–
10	366	LAKE TIBERIAS (14) (F) Harry Derham 5 11-0	Paul O'Brien	107
11	3-60	NO PANIC (14) J Scott 5 11-0	R Dingle	104
12	1-2	RELIGOUS CROSS (33) N Mulholland 5 11-0	C O'Farrell	–
13	95	RIBBA HILL (19) S Hosie 4 11-0	H Kimber	107
14	2-	GALACTIC PRINCESS (268) Daisy Hitchins 4 10-7	R David(7)	–

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 6, 11.

SP FORECAST: 5-4 Le Beau Madrik, 4 Knock Off Soxs, 5 Religous Cross, 10 Crystello, 12 Lake Tiberias, 16 Ribba Hill, Kiss Gold, 25 Bye Bye Salam, Galactic Princess, 33 Others.
2024: U Cant Be Serious 5-11-0, Freddie Gingell(3) 5-1 (J Tizzard), 10 ran.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Good. Right Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2020-25):** Harry Cobden 33% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2020-25):** P Nicholls 32% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.20 Crystello (tongue strap), 1.50 Reforme (tongue strap), 2.20 Al Fonce (hood), Miss Carbo (cheek pieces, hood), 2.50 Milan Ac (blinkers), See The Green (blinkers), 3.55 Green Sky (cheek pieces), Cornish Storm (cheek pieces), 12.50 Golden Garden (tongue strap), Bouquet De Paris (hood). **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Al Fonce** (2.20) France; **I Am Spider Man** (2.50) 149 miles.

THE SCOUT

12.50	Innamorato	2.50	Chedington's Guest
1.20	Knock Off Soxs	3.23	Anytrixwilldo
1.50	Fat Faced Columbo	3.55	BORDER GEM
2.20	Lady Tadita		

1.50 MEMORIAL NOVICES' HANDICAP CHASE
£7,024 (4) 2m 7f 3yds (10)

1	2587/2-L	BALLYFINN (43) A Honeyball 7 12-0	R Dingle	101
2	546-	DYNO DAVE (258) N Henderson 7 11-13	F Gordon	–
3	312-1LU	JONGLEUR D'ETOILES (23) N Mulholland 6 11-12	C O'Farrell	67
4	66-2315	HELLO CELLO (37) H Fry 6 11-10	B Carver	88
5	3P-L722	BERTIE WOOSTER (19) J Tizzard 7 11-7	B J Powell	109
6	2111-5R	MOVE WITH THE BEAT (20) (F) J Snowden 6 11-5	Isabelle Ryder(7)	103
7	L65214	REFORME (26) T R Gretton 6 11-0	R T Dunne	106
8	P243-2	● FAT FACED COLUMBO (43) R Mitford-Slade 5 10-12	J Best	110
9	9304-L5	ONLY GOSSIP (19) P Gundry 8 10-10	C Pritchard(3)	–
10	P1-5622	INCHAGOILL LADY (19) K Pickard 9 10-5	C Bament(7)	★113

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10
CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 3, 10.

SP FORECAST: 4 Fat Faced Columbo, 5 Bertie Wooster, 6 Move With The Beat, 13-2 Jongleur D'etoiles, 7 Dyno Dave, 15-2 Inchagoill Lady, 8 Ballyfinn, 10 Hello Cello, 14 Others.
2024: Langley Hundred 7-11-9, Micheal Nolan 11-4 Fav (P Hobbs & J White), 10 ran.

2.20 MARES' NOVICES' HURDLE (LISTED)
£25,628 (1) 2m 104yds (10)

1	211	AL FONCE (38) N George & A Zetterholm (FR) 4 11-7	James Reveley	–
2	1/432P-1	ANARIZA (34) (D) T Ellis 5 11-4	J Andrews	117
3	140-4F	GETAWHISKY (39) D Skelton 5 11-4	H Skelton	105
4	19	GREAT DANCE (23) Chester Williams 4 11-4	H Cobden	–
5	11-65U	HERON IN THE PARK (4) T R George 5 11-4	Doubtful	114
6	1-11	● LADY TADITA (49) (D) (S) J Snowden 4 11-4	G Sheehan	121
7	5-93323	OCTOBER HILL (102) D Pipe 5 11-4	R Corcoran	109
8	1	OUR PEGGY (65) J Tizzard 4 11-4	B J Powell	–
9	1630-21	ST IRENE (40) (F) Nick Scholfield 5 11-4	J Quinlan	★122
10	222	MISS CARBO (19) N Mulholland 3 10-3	C O'Farrell	108

CHEEK PIECES: No. 10
HOOD: Nos. 1, 2, 10.

SP FORECAST: 9-4 Lady Tadita, 7-2 Al Fonce, 4 St Irene, 13-2 Getawhisky, 10 Anariza, Our Peggy, 14 Great Dance, 20 Miss Carbo, 33 Others.
2024: Jubilee Alpha 5-11-4, Harry Cobden 15-8 (P Nicholls), 7 ran.

BEATEN FAVOURITES: 12.50 Wertpol(hcp). 1.50 Ballyfinn(hcp ch). 2.50 Chedington's Guest(hcp hdl), Square Du Roule(hcp hdl). 3.23 Faitque De L'Isle(hcp ch). **STABLE SWITCH:** 12.50 **Bellator Bullet** from Alice Haynes to D Skelton, **Golden Garden** from J Osborne to W Greatrex, **Innamorato** from Mme A Crombez in France to P Nicholls, **Lamlash** from J S Moore to J Tickle, **My Kinda Ghaiy** from H Palmer to O Murphy, **Wertpol** from J P Murtagh in Ireland to Harry Derham.

2.50 BOYLE SPORTS HANDICAP HURDLE
£4,753 (5) 2m 7f 198yds (12)

1	L7/42-43	BITSNBUCKLES (23) O Murphy 7 12-0	S Bowen	106
2	756-411	MASK OF ZORRO (22) J Tizzard 5 11-13	B J Powell	105
3	LL2LL-L	I AM SPIDER MAN (57) D Hamer 8 11-13	C Pritchard(3)	76
4	14L-PP4	FACE D'MUSIC (27) Katy Price 6 11-13	Miss C Morris(7)	101
5	L/827-PL	MILAN AC (27) R Curtis 7 11-9	Paul O'Brien	39
6	3-60333	SEE THE GREEN (25) S Hosie 4 11-8	P Hanlon(5)	107
7	8/36L-38	IT'S A BREEZE (14) P Nicholls 6 11-8	B Bromley(5)	93
8	4P3261	LELANTOS (38) (D,F) N Henderson 9 11-8	J Bowen	103
9	67-7526	● CHEDINGTON'S GUEST (25) Kieran Burke 6 11-2	R T Dunne	106
10	1P-3337	LADY CARO (40) E Lavelle 7 11-0	B R Jones	★108
11	L-97	THE ITALIAN FOX (24) J Tizzard 5 10-10	F Gingell	95
12	228214	SQUARE DU ROULE (19) N Hawke 5 10-9	H Cobden	105

BLINKERS: Nos. 5, 6 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 1, 9 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 4, 8, 9
HOOD: Nos. 3, 7.

SP FORECAST: 11-4 Mask Of Zorro, 9-2 Lelantos, 6 Square Du Roule, Bitsnbuckles, 10 Chedington's Guest, See The Green, 12 Others.

3.23 BOYLE SPORTS HANDICAP CHASE
£5,968 (5) 3m 2f 57yds (7)

1	223/3-02	GINGERBRED (25) C J Gray 7 12-0	J M Davies	–
2	6/1131-2	WEST ORCHARD (26) J Tizzard 8 12-0	B J Powell	–
3	1-P34PF	● ANYTRIXWILLDO (14) (C) J & A O'Neill 7 11-11	K Brogan	99
4	1-46143	FAITQUE DE L'ISLE (37) H Evans 10 11-8	Miss L M Turner(5)	102
5	0-L3P45	EDGEWELL (14) (F) Nick Scholfield 7 11-5	J Quinlan	★103
6	7222-21	JUKEBOX D'EDDY (26) T R Gretton 6 10-9	S Bowen	96
7	653-45P	HE'LLSTOPATTHETOP (26) Mrs R Ford 8 10-2	H Kimber	46

BLINKERS: No. 5 VISOR: No. 6
TONGUE STRAP: No. 6
CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 2, 3, 4, 7.

SP FORECAST: 5-2 Jukebox D'eddy, 4 Faitque De L'Isle, 5 West Orchard, Edgewell, Anytrixwilldo, 7 Gingerbred, 33 He'llstopatthetop.
2024: Caeruleum 6-12-0, Harry Kimber 9-4 Fav (R Walford), 10 ran.

3.55 JOCKEYS' TRAINING SERIES HCAP HURDLE
£5,545 (4) 2m 3f 1yds (8)

1	213-6L	ZAOCHEN ENKI (44) P Nicholls 4 12-0	F Keighley(3)	109
2	38-6029	CORNISH STORM (14) (C) W Kittow 6 11-13	O Palmer(3)	★114
3	638-8L7	BALBOA (26) Seamus Mullins 5 11-12	Ben Smith	106
4	12322L	DIRTY DEN (26) S Hosie 5 11-10	Harry Atkins	111
5	34L2-L3	GREEN SKY (20) D Pipe 5 11-8	R Corcoran(6)	111
6	PL/P61-L	VERNON SUBUTEX (17) (D) Mrs S Leech 8 11-5	Miss Roisin Leech(8)	96
7	3253-32	INFERNO SACREE (29) (D) N Hawke 7 11-5	Murray Dodd	112
8	42-5424	● BORDER GEM (14) J Scott 5 10-12	C Bament	108

TONGUE STRAP: No. 6
CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 2, 5
HOOD: No. 4.

SP FORECAST: 11-4 Zaochen Enki, 4 Green Sky, 5 Inferno Sacree, 6 Border Gem, 13-2 Dirty Den, 8 Cornish Storm, 10 Balboa, 16 Vernon Subutex.
2024: Tom Doniphon 5-11-12, James Turner 9-4 Fav (P Hobbs & J White), 8 ran.

1.20 **Galactic Princess** from Matthew O'Connor in Ireland to Daisy Hitchins. 2.20 **October Hill** from C Bowe in Ireland to D Pipe, **Our Peggy** from J Fogarty in Ireland to J Tizzard. 2.50 **I Am Spider Man** from Mrs A Thorpe to D Hamer.

WOLVERHAMPTON SKYSPORTSRACING

4.30 APPRENTICE HANDICAP
£3,716 (Class 5) 1m 5f 219yds (8 declared)

1	(8)	6-3L609	● CIRCUIT BREAKER (80) J & A O'Neill 5 10-2	J Dace(3)	★81
2	(3)	116-225	GIFTED ANGEL (22) (C,D) Jack Jones 5 10-0	W Fentiman	77
3	(2)	30L139	FRANCESCO BARACCA (27) (C,D) E J-Houghton 4 9-12	J Nicholls(3)	77
4	(6)	604L76	CIVIL LAW (10) (C) R Teal 8 9-11	Donagh J Murphy(7)	80
5	(5)	3L1834	MOON SNIPER (22) W Muir & C Grassick 3 9-10	R Kavanagh(3)	72
6	(1)	611124	YOUNG ENDLESS (14) (C,D) K Frost 6 9-10	A Voikhansky	75
7	(7)	332L42	GOLD PENNY (29) (F) J & T Gosden 3 9-8	L Catton	67
8	(4)	2221L3	COSMIC SOUL (14) P Neville 5 9-4	Archie Young(3)	76

TONGUE STRAP: No. 8 CHEEK PIECES: No. 7.

SP FORECAST: 3 Gold Penny, 4 Young Endless, Cosmic Soul, 5 Gifted Angel, 8 Francesco Baracca, 10 Moon Sniper, Civil Law, 14 Circuit Breaker.

5.00 BETMGM NURSERY 2YO
£3,140 (6) 6f 20yds (11)

1	(2)	672446	MY DAD TOM (22) R Hannon 9-9	S M Levey	69
2	(8)	3623	HAVANA JAG (17) D Cunha 9-9	G Wood	70
3	(4)	99714	REALITY QUEEN (71) (D,F) J Portman 9-8	R Hornby	68
4	(5)	238055	MUST BE TEN (15) J Osborne 9-7	C Shepherd	63
5	(6)	63645	BAILEYS ONTHEROCKS (26) J Tate 9-7	H Crouch	67
6	(9)	65924	BLINDFOLD GAMES (12) (F) G Boughey 9-7	B Loughnane	66
7	(11)	072332	SUNLIT SEA (14) Sir M Prescott 9-5	L Morris	68
8	(10)	0784L2	MISTER MOET (8) (D) S Dixon 9-5	K O'Neill	67
9	(3)	976	SPIRIT OF MARA (21) R Fahey 9-4	C Hardie	69
10	(1)	LL5467	● RESALAH (85) Mrs N Evans 9-2	E Greatrex	★76
11	(7)	501528	FAR TOO FIZZY (12) (D) D Loughnane 9-1	H Doyle	67

BLINKERS: Nos. 4, 7 TONGUE STRAP: No. 6 CHEEK PIECES: No. 8.

SP FORECAST: 9-4 Sunlit Sea, 5 Havana Jag, 7 Blindfold Games, 8 Reality Queen, Mister Moet, 10 Must Be Ten, 12 Spirit Of Mara, 14 Baileys Ontherocks, 16 Others.

5.30 MAKE THE MOVE TO MIDNITE HANDICAP
£7,956 (3) 6f 20yds (9)

1	(5)	5970U0	● COACHELLO (101) (C&D) M Loughnane 7 9-9	B Loughnane	94
2	(9)	4671-L9	MEDIA SHOOTER (13) (C&D) James Owen 4 9-6	D Keenan	80
3	(2)	59LL51	INTERVENTION (13) (C&D) M Appleby 8 9-6	L Morris	96
4	(3)	765152	MANY A STAR (142) (C&D) J Osborne 8 9-5	R Hornby	97
5	(1)	L57L58	KULLAZAIN (42) J Tate 3 9-4	H Crouch	★99
6	(7)	315162	VALLEY OFTHE KINGS (13) (C,D,F) D Cunha 4 9-4	G Wood	97
7	(6)	818621	ACCRUAL (8) (C&D) D Loughnane 4 9-2(5ex)	R Scott	95
8	(8)	124413	HAVANA RUM (12) (D,F) R Fahey 5 9-0	E Tindall(7)	96
9	(4)	312352	PAPA COCKTAIL (8) (C&D) M Herrington 6 8-10	E Greatrex	98

BLINKERS: No. 6 TONGUE STRAP: No. 4 CHEEK PIECES: No. 1 EYE COVERS: No. 7 HOOD: No. 3.

SP FORECAST: 7-2 Accrual, 4 Intervention, 9-2 Valley Ofthe Kings, 5 Havana Rum, Papa Cocktail, 10 Many A Star, Kullazain, 25 Media Shooter, Coachello.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Standard. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2020-25):** Luke Morris 12% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2020-25):** A Carroll 9% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 5.00 Sunlit Sea (blinkers), 6.30 Peas And Queues (blinkers), 7.00 She's Crafty (visor, tongue strap), Zipwire (cheek pieces), Elemental (blinkers), 7.30 Leeson Street (tongue strap), 8.30 Captain Kinsella (visor). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 5.00 Sunlit Sea. 5.30 Many A Star, Valley Ofthe Kings(hcp). 6.00 Safe Harbor. 8.00 First Greyed(hcp), The Sweet Escape(hcp). 8.30 Amerjeet(hcp). **DRAW:** Little effect. **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Coeur Jaune** (7.30) 155 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 5.00 **Resalah** from Alice Haynes to Mrs N Evans. 7.00 **Trust No One** from Alice Haynes to Lemos Souza. 7.30 **Ghaiyyath Park** from J Tate to M Appleby, **Leeson Street** from Alice Haynes to G Boughey.

THE SCOUT

4.30	Circuit Breaker	7.00	HARDSTYLE (nap)
5.00	Resalah	7.30	Leeson Street
5.30	Coachello	8.00	Youarenotforgiven
6.00	All Worthwhile	8.30	Amerjeet
6.30	Katie's Song		

6.00 FILLIES' RESTRICTED NOVICE STKS (DIV 1) 2YO
£3,402 (5) 7f 36yds (8)

1	(7)	3	● ALL WORTHWHILE (22) D Loughnane 9-2	R Scott	75
2	(8)		CHANTELLE Sir M Prescott 9-2	L Morris	–
3	(4)	422	QUEEN SANA (31) (F) Ollie Sangster 9-2	B Loughnane	★80
4	(6)	35	SAFE HARBOR (11) M Botti 9-2	H Doyle	77
5	(1)		DORA VITA R Phillips 8-12	C Hutchinson	–
6	(3)	5	FAIR Y ISLE (57) H Evans 8-12	S M Levey	62
7	(5)	L	SANDS END (40) W Muir & C Grassick 8-12	L Edmunds	22
8	(2)	2	SEEING STARS (24) (F) W Knight 8-12	C Shepherd	76

SP FORECAST: 7-4 Queen Sana, 2 Seeing Stars, 5 All Worthwhile, 13-2 Safe Harbor, 12 Chantelle, 25 Fair Y Isle, 33 Sands End, Dora Vita.

6.30 FILLIES' RESTRICTED NOVICE STKS (DIV 2) 2YO
£3,402 (5) 7f 36yds (8)

1	(4)	95	JAMIE SOMMERS (179) D Loughnane 9-2	R Scott	★75
2	(7)		● KATIE'S SONG (F) R Hughes 9-2	F Marsh	–
3	(6)	8	THAT'S ENOUGH (22) Dr R Newland & J Insole 9-2	H Doyle	50
4	(5)		FAFFS GOLD Mrs I G-Leveque 9-0	M Ghiani	–
5	(8)	85	BERGAMO GOLD (15) (F) C Johnston 8-12	C Shepherd	66
6	(3)		ENCHANTRES K Frost 8-12	A Voikhansky	–
7	(1)	L	PEAS AND QUEUES (41) J S Moore 8-12	R Hornby	–
8	(2)		SHOW ME GOLD T Dascombe 8-12	W Cox	–

BLINKERS: No. 7.

SP FORECAST: 5-2 Jamie Sommers, 11-4 Bergamo Gold, 3 Katie's Song, 5 Show Me Gold, 14 That's Enough, Enchantres, 25 Faffs Gold, 50 Peas And Queues.

7.00 BET 10 GET 40 WITH BETMGM NURSERY 2YO
£3,140 (6) 1m 142yds (8)

1	(1)	457761	SNAAFY (22) (C&D) D Loughnane 9-9	R Scott	65
2	(2)	04445	CREDIT FORGEDD IT (22) R Hannon 9-9	S M Levey	70
3	(8)	433232	ZIPWIRE (10) (F) J S Moore 9-7	Taylor Fisher(3)	68
4	(5)	854257	SHE'S CRAFTY (53) Jack Morland 9-4	C Shepherd	★71
5	(4)	866	● HARDSTYLE (13) G Boughey 9-0	B Loughnane	63
6	(7)	L6L	VIETNORM (28) A Keatley 8-11	O McSweeney	67
7	(3)	08L38	TRUST NO ONE (32) Lemos Souza 8-10	K O'Neill	69
8	(6)	7L86	ELEMENTAL (10) K Frost 8-3	C Hardie	63

BLINKERS: No. 8 VISOR: No. 4 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 4, 7
CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 3, 7.

SP FORECAST: 2 Snaafy, 9-4 Zipwire, 5 Credit Forgedd It, 6 Hardstyle, 12 Vietnorm, 16 Elemental, 20 She's Crafty, 33 Trust No One.

VITAL STATISTICS

IN-FORM TRAINERS (last 10 days) C Johnston 67% (1 wins and 3 places from 6 runners), J Scott 67% (3/1/6), Christian Williams 60% (3/0/5), E Dunlop 60% (1/2/5), H Fry 60% (2/1/5), A Honeyball 57% (2/2/7).
IN-FORM JOCKEYS Rian Corcoran 80% (3 wins and 1 places from 5 runners), Callum Pritchard 67% (2/6/12), Callum Shepherd 62% (4/4/13).

7.30 BETMGM FILLIES' HANDICAP
£3,716 (5) 1m 142yds (8)

1	(3)	174225	WILHELMINA (27) K P De Foy 3 9-12	J Mitchell	78
2	(8)	573710	BEAUTY BY MY SIDE (26) (C) J Parr 3 9-11	C Fallon	79
3	(7)	375426	LIV MY LIFE (8) S C Williams 4 9-6	M Ghiani	77
4	(1)	154344	COEUR JAUNE (21) D O'Meara 3 9-5	D Nolan	78
5	(6)	L09034	EMERY DOWN (36) J Butler 3 9-4	L Morris	77
6	(5)	523	● LEESON STREET (64) G Boughey 3 9-2	B Loughnane	77
7	(2)	626072	GHAIYYATH PARK (22) M Appleby 3 9-2	A Rawlinson	78
8	(4)	251347	AMBER HONEY (17) (C&D) E Dunlop 3 8-12	C Shepherd	★80

BLINKERS: No. 8 TONGUE STRAP: No. 6 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 2, 3.

SP FORECAST: 5-2 Wilhelmina, 4 Ghaiyyath Park, 11-2 Leeson Street, 7 Liv My Life, Amber Honey, 8 Coeur Jaune, Emery Down, 14 Beauty By My Side.

8.00 MIDNITE HANDICAP
£5,234 (5) 1m 1f 104yds (12)

1	(2)	142171	LOVE YOUR WORK (8) (C&D,F) Darryll Holland 9 10-2(4ex)	K O'Neill	68
2	(8)	3-364LL	REDHOT WHISPER (15) A Wintle 4 10-0	F Marsh	69
3	(9)	841726	SERIOUS LOOK (15) (C&D) T Faulkner 5 9-13	Zoe Lewis(7)	71
4	(3)	486	THE CORPORATE GUY (32) Jack Jones 3 9-12	D E Hogan	71
5	(11)	161503	● YOUARENOTFORGIVEN (15) (C&D) A Carroll 7 9-11	C Bishop	73
6	(10)	316311	SALARIA (17) (C&D) Charlie Clover 3 9-11	C Fallon	74
7	(7)	546713	BOWNDER (13) (F) J Portman 3 9-9	Olivia Tubb(5)	73
8	(1)	L2550L	RIYADH GEM (22) (C&D) Faye Bramley 3 9-9	C Hutchinson	73
9	(12)	L33518	RATING (17) (C&D) G Harris 4 9-8	J Dace(5)	★75
10	(5)	L44436	THE SWEET ESCAPE (8) D Loughnane 3 9-8	H Doyle	73
11	(4)	114044	FIRST GREYED (8) (C&D) T Faulkner 7 9-7	B Loughnane	73
12	(6)	42LL02	TOKEN LOVE (29) O Greenall & J Guerriero 3 9-4	A Rawlinson	73

VISOR: No. 11 TONGUE STRAP: No. 12 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 5, 8, 9 HOOD: No. 2.

SP FORECAST: 4 Salaria, 5 Youarenotforgiven, 13-2 Token Love, 7 Bowndler, First Greyed, 8 Love Your Work, 10 The Sweet Escape, 12 Others.

8.30 MIDNITE HANDICAP
£3,140 (6) 5f 21yds (10)

1	(10)	211251	SAM'S XPRESS (8) (C&D) J & S Birkett 5 9-12(5ex)	D E Hogan	★77
2	(9)	250574	PHOENIX BEACH (4) (C&D) S Dixon 6 9-9	J Haynes	71
3	(5)	423336	PEREGRINE FALCON (22) P Morris 3 9-9	D Nolan	71
4	(7)	394522	HAVANA GILA (26) (D) Harry Eustace 3 9-7	P-L Jamin	71
5	(4)	318142	SON OF ASTAR (12) (D) A Carroll 3 9-6	Jack Doughty	72
6	(2)	L7L896	CAPTAIN KINSELLA (8) (D) J Gallagher 3 9-6	D Keenan	62
7	(3)	581211	ALAFDHAL (17) (C&D,F) P McEntee 7 9-6	L Morris	71
8	(8)	933314	STREET LIFE (8) (C&D) P Morris 8 9-2	E Tindall(7)	71
9	(1)	L5LL49	HE'S AN ANGEL (12) (C,D) (S) K Frost 5 9-1	C Hardie	71
10	(6)	684852	● AMERJEET (8) (D) M Herrington 3 9-1	B Loughnane	70

BLINKERS: No. 5 VISOR: Nos. 6, 7 CHEEK PIECES: No. 8.

SP FORECAST: 3 Sam's Xpress, 5 Alafdhal, 11-2 Havana Gila, 6 Amerjeet, 7 Son Of Astar, 8 He's An Angel, 10 Phoenix Beach, 16 Others.

GOSSIP FROM THE GALLOPS

Newmarket: NAZARE
(12.35 Haydock)
West: CAPTAIN HUGO
(1.05 Haydock)
Lambourn: LADY TADITA
(2.20 Taunton)
Midlands: HE'S AN ANGEL
(8.30 Wolverhampton)

WORLD OF SPORT

Great messages got Lando over the line

FORMULA ONE

BY **DARREN WELLS**

LANDO NORRIS was spurred on to his maiden title by text messages from former champions including Sebastian Vettel and Lewis Hamilton.

NORRIS

The 26-year-old's 2025 title charge was fuelled by words of encouragement from the pair, as well as former MotoGP champion Casey Stoner.

Norris told F1.com: "I've had some great words and text messages and conversations with some incredible people that have won World Championships in different sports, Lewis and others like Seb.

"A lot of these people, [such as] Stoner, who, when I needed it most, sent me that little text message and said, 'Think of this, believe in yourself, do this, do that'."

Norris clinched the title by just two points from Max Verstappen.

"I'd certainly say having these moments of faith from others got me those two points," Norris added.

THE BIG PICTURE

CLEAR WATER: Runners stay dry at Newbury

BY **DARREN WELLS**

TADEJ POGACAR insists he still has "room for improvement" in 2026 after a year in which the Slovenian claimed a fourth Tour de France title and second world title.

The 27-year-old took his professional career wins into triple figures (108) in 2025, as well as landing victories at three of the five major monuments.

But Pogacar told L'Équipe: "There's always room for improvement, to see how I can be even better, how far I can go.

"It's not very difficult to stay motivated, even more so when you know I have a long contract with my team and many years ahead of me.

"Everyone needs to do what they love.

"It's different from 10 years ago, but I still love this sport – it's a part of my life, and I can't imagine doing anything else."

CYCLING

10 to tackle
RATINGS
0-3 Oh dear
4-6 Small beer
7-9 So near
10 Sporting Seer

1. Which two players were each runner-up five times in the BDO World Darts Championship between 1978-2020?
2. Which Winter Olympics women's super-G champion will miss the 2026 event through injury?
3. Which two clubs lost their first five games in this season's Gallagher PREM?
4. In cricket in 2013, who became the first person to have captained England in 100 ODIs?
5. In Manchester United's double-winning 1995/96 season, which Division Two side knocked them out of the Coca-Cola Cup by winning 3-0 at Old Trafford?
6. Which American golfer won The Masters on his first appearance in the event in 1979?
7. What was the nickname of boxer Jake LaMotta?
8. Who was British flat racing champion jockey 26 times between 1925 and 1953?
9. Which Team GB athlete was women's heptathlon champion at the 2006 Commonwealth Games, having earned bronze at the preceding and subsequent Olympics?
10. What are the surnames of the former Australian doubles tennis players known as the Woodies?

ANSWERS: 1 Eric Bristow and John Lowe. 2 Lara Gut-Behrami. 3 Gloucester and Newcastle Red Bulls. 4 Charlotte Edwards. 5 York City. 6 Fuzzy Zoeller. 7 Raging Bull. 8 Gordon Richards. 9 Kelly Sotherton. 10 Woodbridge and Woodforde.

HAMSTRUNG Atkinson will miss the fifth Test with injury

Atkinson over and out as tour claims another casualty

CRICKET

FROM **RORY DOLLARD** in Melbourne

GUS ATKINSON has been ruled out of the final Ashes Test, leaving England three bowlers down as they close the series in Sydney.

Atkinson pulled up while bowling in his side's two-day win in Melbourne and played no further part in the match.

Scans have shown a left hamstring injury that will not allow him to feature in the New Year Test and the severity may not be known until further assessment when he returns home.

The 27-year-old bows out of his first Ashes series with six wickets at 47.33, having shown glimpses of his ability without ever asserting himself on the occasion.

Atkinson's early exit follows the withdrawals of Mark Wood, whose knee problems flared up after the first Test, and Jofra Archer, who sustained a side strain after turning out in each of the first three matches.

All three were in the tourists' first-choice XI when they hit Australia with a barrage of pace on day one in Perth, but a much-changed attack will now finish the series.

No replacements have been called up as England look to reduce the margin of defeat by making it 3-2, with Durham's Matthew Potts next in line and Surrey's Matthew Fisher also on hand having previously joined the main squad from the Lions party.

Australia head coach Andrew McDonald has suggested next week's Test in Sydney feels a diminished occasion, stating: "The Ashes were done at 3-0". The Baggy Greens wrapped up a series win inside 11 days after wins in Perth, Brisbane and Adelaide but saw their hopes of a 5-0 whitewash disappear when the tourists finally hit back in a two-day finish in Melbourne.

The MCG pitch for that fourth Test has been rated 'unsatisfactory' by the International Cricket Council.

The teams reconvene for the final time at the SCG on Sunday, with the hosts seeking an emphatic 4-1 win, while their opponents look to limit the damage by making it 3-2.

But McDonald (above) feels there was less at stake as soon as his side laid claim to the urn, pointing to World Test Championship points as the main goal rather than any bragging rights over the old enemy.

"The Ashes are done," he said.

"There is a Test match against England that contributes to the World Test Championship and that's what we're hungry for, to bank more points.

"The scoreline will just mean either more WTC points or less; I know that sounds simplistic and it's probably not what people want to hear.

"It's England and Australia, it's an Ashes Test, but the Ashes were done at 3-0."

Revolutionary Woods hits 50 still calling the shots

BY **NEIL MCLEMAN**

TIGER WOODS, the American superstar who changed golf by winning the 1997 Masters, celebrates his 50th birthday today.

But after 15 Majors, 82 PGA Tour titles and countless surgeries, the biggest name in golf has not yet finished making headlines on and off the golf course.

Woods, who made his PGA Tour debut as a 16-year-old amateur in 1992, was arguably the biggest name in world sport even before he completed the Tiger Slam in 2001 by holding all four Majors.

He was a revolutionary in the middle-aged, middle-class, white sport because he was young, athletic and black. And super cool. Popularity soared and prize money skyrocketed.

In 2000, Ernie Els (right) said: "He's a legend in the making. He's 24. He's probably going to be bigger than Elvis when he gets into his 40s." His fame and notoriety only increased with his 2009 sex scandal and 2017 DUI arrest.

His return to win his fifth Masters – and his first Major for 11 years – in 2019 was the ultimate redemption story.

"If he never got injured, he'd have 25 majors and 125 wins," claimed his friend Fred Couples.

His playing days are clearly numbered.

The world No.2,563 has undergone operations on his lower back and his ruptured Achilles tendon and had a lumbar disc replacement since last year's Open at Royal Troon.

He will get PGA Tour invites for life but he is now eligible for the Seniors Tour – where he could use a buggy. He is the only player to have won the US Junior Amateur, US Amateur and US Open, while the 2026 US Senior Open in July is at Jack Nicklaus' home course in Ohio in July.

Darren Clarke said: "I would love to see him come out and play and compete with us."

Woods reported this month he has returned to chipping and putting and said: "Just let me get back to playing again, let me do that and then I'll kind of figure out what the schedule is going to be."

Off the course, Woods turned down a mega-offer to join LIV Golf and was appointed to the PGA Tour policy board in 2023. He now heads up the Future Competition Committee charged with producing a new streamlined tour for the 2027 season.

Woods is expected to finally captain the US Ryder Cup team at Adare Manor in 2027. But speaking this month, he said: "No one's asked me about it."

It was the kind of short, evasive response he had often deployed during his career.

But in the final question of the same press conference, he gave a surprising answer when he was asked why he was now filling his days with Zoom calls and strategy meetings to re-shape the game after his playing career.

"Well, the PGA Tour gave me an opportunity to chase after a childhood dream," he said.

"I got a chance to hit my first ball in my first PGA Tour event when I was 16. I've been involved with the PGA Tour ever since then. Now I am able to make an impact in a different way for other generations to come."

EYE OF THE TIGER

YELL OF A STORY Winning a fifth Masters title, after an 11-year Major drought littered with injuries, was extraordinary

"He was young, athletic and black. And super cool"

SUITS YOU Nick Faldo presents Woods with his first Masters Green Jacket

A LEGENDARY CV

Majors won: 15
(second only to Jack Nicklaus' 18 on the all-time list)

Masters: 1997, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2019

PGA Championship: 1999, 2000, 2006, 2007

US Open: 2000, 2002, 2008

The Open: 2000, 2005, 2006

Players Championship: 2001, 2013

Ryder Cup

Victories: 1999

Total matches: 37

Individual record: 13 wins, 21 losses, 3 ties

CAREER IN NUMBERS

82 – PGA Tour wins, level with Sam Snead for the most ever with Nicklaus third on 73. Woods has 110 wins across all tours.

120,999,166 – career earnings in US dollars from PGA Tour events, an all-time record. Rory McIlroy sits in second place, just over $13m behind.

683 – weeks spent at world No.1, including 264 in succession from August 1999 to September 2004 – both all-time records.

61 – Woods' lowest competitive round, achieved on four separate occasions. His best in a major is 63, in the second round as he won the 2007 US PGA.

39 – Times Woods missed the cut in 382 PGA Tour events, less than half of his win total.

ROAR POWER
Van Gerwen is planning to cause a bang

LIFT OFF
Anderson is aiming to light up Ally Pally

READY, AIM... FIREWORKS

BY **MIKE WALTERS**

THEY are the unrivalled kings of Ally Pally with five world titles and another seven defeats in the final between them.

When Michael van Gerwen meets Gary Anderson in a seismic fourth-round tie at the Paddy Power PDC World Championship, it will be a heavyweight contest for the ages.

And as MVG primed the blue touchpaper, he grinned: "When you play against Gary, there's always room for fireworks – I hope it will bring the best out of us again."

Since the tournament moved to a north London hilltop citadel they have turned into their fortress, nobody has won more matches on the Alexandra Palace stage than Van Gerwen (62) and Anderson (54).

In consecutive years, during the middle of the last decade, two thunderous encounters at the World Championship defined their rivalry.

In 2014, MVG recovered from 3-1 down to edge a third-round thriller 4-3, a fightback which left Anderson so "cheesed off" that he resolved to bottle the anguish and unleash it.

'Of course, he loves to make himself the underdog... but it's all nonsense.'

Twelve months later, in the semi-finals, the great sultan of Musselburgh wreaked his revenge with a barnstorming 6-3 win – and he would go on to deny Phil 'The Power' Taylor a 17th world title in a dramatic final.

In their last 50 meetings across all competitions, Van Gerwen leads 35-13 (with two draws) but he isn't falling for Anderson's schtick about being a 'part-timer' who spends more time on his fishing lakes than the oche these days.

MVG expects banger of a battle v 'part-timer' Gary

MVG said: "Like everyone's saying, the old Gary's back and everyone's really happy. Gary is fantastic. We all know how good he is.

"Of course, he loves to make himself the underdog. He loves to be like, 'I'm only here for the fun. I love my fishing, blah, blah, blah'. But it's all nonsense. We all know that. So you always need to make sure you're sharp against him. He loves to call himself a part-timer. But when I was in the hotel the other day, every session I was there, he was there practising with his son Tai – so he's not really a part-timer. Don't always believe his words.

"I didn't know I had won more games here than anyone else, I have a great record against Gary and he'd rather play someone else than me."

At 55, Father Time may be tapping Anderson on the shoulder, and nobody has lifted the Sid Waddell Trophy beyond the age of 52 (Phil Taylor, in 2013). But the anguish of that narrow defeat by Van Gerwen 11 years ago has never left him.

"One time I was right cheesed off," he admitted. "I was kicking myself and I said I wouldn't let that happen again.

"I was so peed off about losing that game. You know what I'm like – I like to get a bit narky. These are the ones that get the best out of me.

"We all know what Michael's done in the last 10-15 years. When Phil Taylor retired, Van Gerwen took over. Van Gerwen's dropped a bit, (Luke) Humphries took over. Now we've got Humphries and (Luke) Littler."

BEST OF ENEMIES
Van Gerwen and Anderson during 2017 battle

Big-time Charlie lapping it up

BY **DARREN WELLS**

'CHAMPAGNE' Charlie Manby insists he's got plenty of bottle as his dream run at the World Championships continued to bubble by knocking out Ricky Evans 4-2.

The 20-year-old is the latest youngster causing a fizz at Alexandra Palace – and could yet be the toast of the town if he can find a way past Gian van Veen and reach the last eight.

Manby had to battle back from a set down twice before winning the last three sets and the final five legs. But the world No.163 will have to brush up on his doubles if he's to go all the way after missing 41 chances of a checkout.

"It hasn't really sunk in yet but I'm feeling it all now," the Yorkshireman said. "The doubles were frustrating me – I should have taken the first set! But I recovered quite well.

"I showed I've got a lot of bottle after my first game, while the second game was quite easy. Gian is doing well but so am I. I'm waiting for my A-game to come."

Meanwhile, Kevin Doets dumped out 15th seed Nathan Aspinall to set up a showdown with Luke Humphries and declared: "I was just on fire."

The 27-year-old Dutchman looked to be heading for the exit when Aspinall sneaked the fifth set and open up a 3-2 lead.

But Doets responded by scorching his rival 3-0 in each of the next two sets.

"That was insane!" Doets said. "This is what you dream of."

Earlier, Justin Hood beat Ryan Meikle 4-1 to book his spot in the last-16.

DRINKING IT ALL IN
Charlie Manby is on a roll

NO LOVE FOR LUKE

BY **MIKE WALTERS**

LUKE HUMPHRIES hasn't been feeling the love of Ally Pally crowds – and he was surprised so many fans wanted him to come unstuck against German giant Gabriel Clemens.

'Cool Hand' Luke (inset) survived a fightback from the Teutonic man-mountain to reach the last 16, but he was taken aback by the huge contingent of German fans roaring their support for Clemens.

The former world No.1 admitted: "They were hostile but they weren't bad, it just shows how great the German fans are. They out-did everyone in that crowd.

"When you play in Germany, there's not one German player that won't be cheered to the rafters, but in England not every Englishman gets that level of backing.

"I'm not saying that (I'm not loved) but wherever I go, I don't have the same level of support that Stephen Bunting, Luke Littler or Michael van Gerwen gets with everyone cheering their name.

"It's not that I desperately crave it, and people like Bunting and Luke deserve it, but it takes me aback a little bit when I get it because I don't get it so much. It makes you emotional and appreciate it even more.

"When you go to a Euro Tour, of course it's tough, but you sit back and realise how great the German fans are and how much respect they give you."

ODDS AND NODS

William HILL

BY **LEE PHELPS**
William Hill spokesperson

IT was a big winning weekend for Final One Standing players, with £325,000 won including one player taking home a cool £200,000 after picking Brentford to win and seeing the others fall when Sunderland failed to pick up three points against Leeds.

Tonight, the original and biggest £500,000 jackpot could be won, with seven players going head-to-head for half a million pounds. They all have the same two teams left: Burnley, who play Newcastle at home, and Wolves, who are at Manchester United.

It's a big night for the Premier League title race too with in-form Aston Villa looking to make it 12 straight wins at Arsenal to go level on points with the title favourites.

Arsenal to score in the first half of their game against Villa is the Epic Boost and is now even money from odds-on.

We all know Villa are having a cracking season, but they're not the quickest out of the blocks on the road.

Villa are in the bottom three of the away games table for the first half, but in the second half, they'd be right near the top, as they showed against Chelsea (Ollie Watkins, below).

Flip that around, and Arsenal start games well. Ten times this season they've led at the break and they've gone on to win the lot.

Good luck with your bets and if you're not already playing Final One Standing or have been knocked out, you can play for free on the William Hill app.

ADVERTORIAL

BURNS' NIGHT

'Special moment' for Wes as Ipswich give Lamps a wake-up call

0-1 Jack Clarke and Ipswich celebrate the opening goal at Coventry

0-2

COVENTRY	0
IPSWICH	2
Clarke 72, Burns 83	

IPSWICH put down a statement of intent last night as they beat runaway leaders Coventry for the second time in just over three weeks.

Jack Clarke opened the scoring after 72 minutes and Wes Burns' first goal since May 2024 doubled the visitors' lead 11 minutes later.

Burns was making just his second appearance since suffering an ACL injury against Liverpool in January. Delighted Ipswich boss Kieran McKenna said: "The second goal was one of the moments of the season, a special moment for Wes, a brilliant moment for the medical staff that have worked with him.

"Even as a manager there are some goals that are more special and Wes scoring that one in the last game of the year was a top moment.

"The win gives the group a bit more belief in themselves – we know we work hard and we work well but big results can validate it a little bit more."

The Tractor Boys, who started the match 13 points behind the Sky Blues, ended Coventry's brilliant run of eight straight home wins. It was their first loss at the CBS Arena this season – and only a third in the league in 2025.

Ipswich dominated the first half, enjoying almost 70 percent of possession against an uncharacteristically passive home side.

Jacob Greaves' cross created the first opening of the match for the visitors when Ivon Azon's header was saved by Carl Rushworth.

Clarke then lashed an effort wide before on-loan Brighton stopper Rushworth made one of the saves of the season to deny Jack Taylor. The 24-year-old sprawled to his right to keep out the midfielder's well-struck effort, tipping onto the underside of the bar before Luke Woolfenden cleared.

The Sky Blues, who had managed just one effort in the first half through Ephron Mason-Clark's header, started the second half on the front foot as Victor Torp's shot was blocked by Greaves.

Ipswich goalkeeper Christian Walton made his first contribution 10 minutes after the break when he pushed away Haji Wright's effort.

Coventry boss Frank Lampard (circle) was left aghast when referee Anthony Backhouse waved away appeals for a penalty after Wright and Darnell Furlong clashed on the edge of the box.

The opener arrived on 72 minutes when Marcelino Nunez picked out Clarke who had plenty of time to get his shot away, looping up off Woolfenden's heel into the net.

Ipswich doubled their lead 11 minutes later through Burns. Nunez was the creator again as he laid the ball into the path of the Wales star, who rolled his shot into the corner.

Lampard said: "It's disappointing but sometimes you just have to say we weren't quite at our usual best and the opposition are a really strong team and we lost the game.

"The important thing now is the reaction behind the scenes, it's our job to analyse it pretty quickly because the next game comes in a few days and I'll be asking a lot of the players to go again."

PHILLIPS BAGS MASON MORE TIME

CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND-UP

WEST BROM eased the pressure on boss Ryan Mason with a 2-1 win over QPR thanks to Nat Phillips' thumping header.

George Campbell opened the scoring for the Baggies but Ousmane Diakite's own goal brought the Rs level. Phillips (right) powered home Mikey Johnston's cross on 55 minutes.

PORTSMOUTH picked up three points at home in a sensational 2-1 defeat of CHARLTON. Conor Shaughnessy's 69th-minute header put Pompey ahead but, in the 97th minute, Harvey Knibbs equalised before Yang Min-hyeok won it 60 seconds later.

SHEFFIELD UNITED won 2-1 at STOKE with goals from Jairo Riedewald and Tom Cannon early in the second half. Ben Wilmot scored for the Potters, who had Ben Pearson sent off late on.

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY held BLACKBURN ROVERS 0-0 at Hillsborough. LEICESTER beat DERBY 2-1 with two goals inside the opening nine minutes. City went in front in the sixth minute through Bobby De Cordova-Reid.

Three minutes later, though, Derby were level as Rhian Brewster struck. But four minutes before the break Jordan James was on target for the winner.

WREXHAM beat PRESTON 2-1. Nathan Broadhead put them ahead in the 39th minute and Oliver Rathbone added the second 13 minutes from time before Alfie Devine reduced the arrears late on. SWANSEA triumphed 1-0 at OXFORD thanks to Zan Vipotnik's 14th-minute winner, while WATFORD earned a 1-0 victory at NORWICH as Vivaldo Semedo scored in the 90th minute.

In the late kick-off, Cameron Archer's equaliser 19 minutes from time grabbed a point for SOUTHAMPTON against BIRMINGHAM. Phil Neumann's 49th-minute header had put the Blues ahead at St Andrew's.

MIDDLESBROUGH 0
HULL CITY 1
Gyabi 12

PAINFUL START
Hull's Ryan Giles came off after six minutes

Deadly Darko gives Tigers big lift against rivals Boro

DARKO GYABI'S early goal was enough to seal a victory for Hull at their promotion rivals – as the Tigers moved to within two points of Middlesbrough in the automatic places.

In a year that started with fears of relegation to League One for the Tigers, it ends with dreams of promotion to the Premier League.

The depleted visitors roared into a 12th-minute lead when Gyabi turned in at the near post from Kyle Joseph's cutback.

City had to withstand pressure late on, but were never really tested and saw out one of their most impressive victories of the campaign.

But Boro are now winless in three, as their cushion over the chasing pack has been slashed and after conceding an early goal, the hosts' attacking struggles of late proved costly.

Less than a month ago, Boro were four goals ahead at half-time at Hull's MKM Stadium, eventually going on to win 4-1.

The return game on Teesside could hardly have been more different, although Hull suffered an early blow when former Boro full-back Ryan Giles was forced off with a muscular injury.

It did not disrupt the Tigers, who still claimed an early lead. Joseph spun away from Matt Targett, and while he was forced wide as he rounded goalkeeper Sol Brynn, he pulled the ball back for Gyabi to slot home.

The hosts had hit a post by that stage, although the offside flag would have ruled out Hayden Hackney's effort, even though replays suggested the midfielder was onside as he met Callum Brittain's cross. Boro spent the rest of the first half trying to get back on level terms, but their final ball tended to be cut out by Hull's well-drilled five-man defence.

Targett fired a free-kick from a promising position into the wall while, at the other end, Joseph glanced a header well wide.

Middlesbrough were dominating possession, but they did not muster an effort on goal until first-half stoppage-time, and even then, Tommy Conway's tame shot was easily saved by Ivor Pandur.

The Croatian also saved from Hackney at the start of the second period, with the Boro skipper curling towards goal after Kaly Sene's pass.

The fact that Riverside boss Kim Hellberg felt the need to make a triple change before the hour mark underlined the extent to which his side were struggling to make an impact.

One of the substitutes, Delano Burgzorg, almost made a game-changing impact with 19 minutes remaining, but while he swivelled sharply in the box to swoop on a loose ball, he could not get hold of his shot properly and Pandur got down to save.

GIFT OF GYAB

WINNING SMILE
Hull's Darko Gyabi (second right) is mobbed

LANGSTAFF HAS LIONS FLYING

BY **DANIEL MARSH**

MACAULAY LANGSTAFF ensured it was a case of repeat rather than revenge as Millwall beat Bristol City in a grudge match to move up to fifth in the Championship standings.

The Lions' 1-0 triumph at Ashton Gate at the start of this month was overshadowed by a mass brawl at the end of the Millwall 2 Bristol C 1 game involving players and staff from both teams. And while plenty of bad blood was expected at The Den, there were no fireworks in a drab first half bar Camiel Neghli's 16th-minute strike.

City looked the more threatening for the majority of the contest and were good value for their leveller four minutes after the break when Adam Randell beat Max Crocombe.

Alex Neil introduced Langstaff to partner the isolated Mihailo Ivanovic up front – and it was he and Thierno Ballo who changed the game.

He looked every inch the fox in the box that terrorised teams at a lower level with his instinctive finish past Max O'Leary giving Millwall a precious late winner.

Ivanovic went close to adding a third in the 90th minute but could only find the side netting with his rasping drive.

But the Lions negotiated eight minutes of additional time to leapfrog Bristol City in the table and ensure they start 2026 flying high in the top six.

KNEESY DOES IT
Langstaff joy at winner

SPORT IN BRIEF

Sky Bet Championship

BIRMINGHAM (0)...1
Neumann 49
COVENTRY (0).....0

SOUTHMPTN (0)...1
Archer 71
IPSWICH (0).....2
Clarke 72
Burns 83

LEICESTER (2).....2
De Cordova-Reid 6
James 41
DERBY (1).....1
Brewster 9
Att: 31,354

MIDDLESBRO (0)...0
HULL (1).....1
Gyabi 12
Att: 31,421

MILLWALL (1).....2
Neghli 16
Langstaff 81
BRISTOL C (0).....1
Randell 49
Att: 18,077

NORWICH (0).....0
WATFORD (0).....1
Semedo 90
Att: 26,553

OXFORD UTD (0)....0
SWANSEA (1).....1
Vipotnik 14
Att: 11,413

PORTSMOUTH (0)..2
Shaughnessy 69
Yang 90
CHARLTON (0).....1
Knibbs 90
Att: 20,401

SHEFF WED (0).....0
BLACKBURN (0)...0
Att: 22,532

STOKE (0).....1
Wilmot 65
SHEFF UTD (0).....2
Riedewald 47
Cannon 53
Att: 24,206

WEST BROM (1).....2
Campbell 25
Phillips 55
QPR (1).....1
Diakite 35 (og)

WREXHAM (1).....2
Broadhead 39
Rathbone 77
PRESTON (0).....1
Devine 84
Att: 10,616

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Coventry	24	15	6	3	54	25	51
Middlesbro	24	12	7	5	33	25	43
Ipswich	24	11	8	5	40	23	41
Hull	24	12	5	7	40	37	41
Millwall	24	11	6	7	27	32	39
Watford	24	10	8	6	34	29	38
Preston	24	9	10	5	31	25	37
Bristol City	24	10	6	8	33	27	36
QPR	24	10	5	9	34	37	35
Stoke	24	10	4	10	29	23	34
Wrexham	24	8	10	6	34	31	34
Leicester	24	9	7	8	34	34	34
Southampton	24	8	8	8	38	34	32
Derby	24	8	8	8	33	33	32
Birmingham	24	8	7	9	32	31	31
West Brom	24	9	4	11	28	32	31
Sheff Utd	24	9	2	13	33	37	29
Swansea	24	8	5	11	25	31	29
Blackburn	23	7	6	10	22	26	27
Charlton	23	7	6	10	22	29	27
Portsmouth	23	6	7	10	21	30	25
Oxford Utd	24	5	7	12	24	33	22
Norwich	24	5	6	13	26	36	21
Sheff Wed	23	1	8	14	18	45	-7

Sky Bet League One

AFC WIMB'DN (0)..0
EXETER (1).....1
Wareham 37

BARNSLEY (0).....0
LINCOLN C (1).....2
Hamer 8
Reach 72
Att: 10,711

BLACKPOOL (2).....4
Bowler 11
Imray 19
Fletcher 62
Bloxham 90
ROTHERHAM (0)...0
Att: 9,636

BOLTON (0).....0
MANSFIELD (1)....1
Oates 43
Att: 22,320

BRADFORD (0).....1
Metcalfe 67
PORT VALE (0).....0

BURTON ALB (0)....0
WIGAN (0).....2
Bettoni 64
Costelloe 87
Att: 3,696

CARDIFF (0).....2
Robinson 64
Salech 82
STEVENAGE (0)....1
Patterson 57
Att: 19,678

HUDDRSFLD (1).....2
Low 45
Radulovic 83
NORTHAMPTN (0) 0
Att: 16,639

LUTON (3).....3
Kodua 8
Clark 20 (pen)
Morris 37
L ORIENT (0).....0

PETERBORO (0).....1
Lindgren 78
READING (1).....1
Kyerewaa 26
Att: 7,225

PLYMOUTH (0).....1
Pepple 90
WYCOMBE (1).....1
Casey 11

STOCKPORT (1).....4
Norwood 29 (pen)
Wootton 60, 83
Senior 90 (og)
DONCASTER (1)....2
Molyneux 25
Bailey 75
Att: 9,629

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cardiff	22	15	2	5	40	23	47
Lincoln City	23	13	5	5	34	23	44
Bradford	22	12	7	3	32	21	43
Stockport Cty	22	11	5	6	33	29	38
Huddersfield	23	11	4	8	42	31	37
Bolton	22	10	7	5	30	21	37
Stevenage	21	10	6	5	25	17	36
Luton	23	10	5	8	33	28	35
Wycombe	23	7	8	8	29	27	29
Reading	22	7	8	7	29	28	29
Mansfield	22	8	5	9	28	28	29
Wigan	22	7	8	7	25	25	29
Blackpool	23	8	5	10	29	30	29
Peterborough	22	9	2	11	26	28	29
Barnsley	20	8	4	8	32	32	28
Leyton Orient	23	8	4	11	34	38	28
AFC Wimbledn	22	8	4	10	24	30	28
Burton Albion	22	7	6	9	23	29	27
Northampton	22	8	3	11	22	28	27
Exeter	22	8	2	12	22	21	26
Plymouth	23	8	2	13	28	38	26
Rotherham	23	6	6	11	22	33	24
Doncaster	23	6	4	13	23	40	22
Port Vale	22	3	6	13	13	30	15

Sky Bet League Two

ACCRINGTON (1)....1
Whalley 45 (pen)
HARROGATE (0)....0
Att: 1,995

BRISTOL R (0).....0
BARNET (1).....2
Senior 45
Glover 86
Att: 8,335

CHELTENHAM (0)...0
SWINDON (0).....2
McGregor 57
Mabete 75
Att: 5,980

CHESTERFLD (0)....0
CAMBRIDGE (1)....1
McLoughlin 44

CRAWLEY TN (1)....1
Barker 43
BROMLEY (1).....3
Cheek 15, 56, 61
Att: 4,058

GILLINGHAM (0)....1
McKenzie 74
COLCHESTER (0)..1
Read 87 (pen)
Att: 7,284

GRIMSBY (0).....1
Amaluzor 83
SHRWSBURY (0)..0
Att: 5,386

MK DONS (0).....1
Paterson 70
NOTTS CO (1).....1
Iorpenda 44
Att: 9,220

NEWPORT (1).....2
Baker-Richardson 28
Braybrooke 76
CREWE (0).....0
Att: 3,925

SALFORD CITY (0)..0
FLEETWOOD (0)...0
Att: 2,851

TRANMERE (0).....1
Brough 50
BARROW (3).....3
Jackson 8
Raglan 18
Fletcher 32

WALSALL (0).....1
Kanu 50
OLDHAM (1).....2
Garner 15
Harratt 90
Att: 6,704

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bromley	23	13	6	4	40	26	45
Swindon	23	13	4	6	37	26	43
Walsall	23	13	4	6	32	21	43
MK Dons	23	11	7	5	44	25	40
Salford City	23	12	4	7	33	30	40
Notts County	23	11	6	6	36	25	39
Chesterfield	23	10	8	5	39	32	38
Cambridge	23	10	8	5	26	19	38
Fleetwood	23	9	7	7	32	29	34
Colchester	23	8	9	6	37	28	33
Gillingham	23	7	11	5	31	26	32
Barnet	23	8	8	7	30	25	32
Crewe	23	9	5	9	34	31	32
Oldham	23	7	10	6	23	18	31
Grimsby	23	8	7	8	34	30	31
Accrington	23	8	6	9	26	26	30
Tranmere	23	7	8	8	37	37	29
Cheltenham	23	8	3	12	21	37	27
Barrow	23	6	6	11	25	33	24
Crawley Town	23	4	7	12	27	40	19
Shrewsbury	23	4	7	12	21	38	19
Bristol Rovers	23	5	3	15	18	44	18
Newport Cty	23	4	5	14	23	41	17
Harrogate Tn	23	4	5	14	18	37	17

Africa Cup Of Nations

Group A

COMOROS (0).....0
MALI (0).....0

ZAMBIA (0).....0
MOROCCO (2).....3
El Kaabi 9, 50
Diaz 27

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Morocco	3	2	1	0	6	1	7
Mali	3	0	3	0	2	2	3
Comoros	3	0	2	1	0	2	2
Zambia	3	0	2	1	1	4	2

Group B

ANGOLA (0).....0
EGYPT (0).....0

ZIMBABWE (1).....2
Maswanhise 19
Modiba 74 (og)
SOUTH AFRICA (1) 3
Moremi 7
Foster 50
Appollis 82 (pen)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Egypt	3	2	1	0	3	1	7
South Africa	3	2	0	1	5	4	6
Angola	3	0	2	1	2	3	2
Zimbabwe	3	0	1	2	4	6	1

DARTS

PDC PADDY POWER WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (Alexandra Palace, London)—**3rd rd:** J Hood (Eng) bt R Meikle (Eng) 4-1, C Manby (Eng) bt R Evans (Eng) 4-2, K Doets (Ned) bt N Aspinall (Eng) 4-3, J Rock (Nirl) bt C Rydz (Eng) 4-1, R Searle (Eng) bt J Hurrell (Eng) 4-0.

TODAY'S DIARY

(7.45pm unless stated)

Premier League

Arsenal v Aston Villa (8.15) .....
(Live on Sky Sports Premier League)
Burnley v Newcastle (7.30).....
Chelsea v AFC Bournemouth (7.30).....
(Live on Sky Sports Main Event)
Man Utd v Wolverhampton (8.15).....
(Live on Sky Sports Football)
Nottingham Forest v Everton (7.30).....
West Ham v Brighton (7.30) .....

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	18	13	3	2	33	11	42
Man City	18	13	1	4	43	17	40
Aston Villa	18	12	3	3	29	19	39
Liverpool	18	10	2	6	30	26	32
Chelsea	18	8	5	5	30	19	29
Man Utd	18	8	5	5	32	28	29
Sunderland	18	7	7	4	20	18	28
Brentford	18	8	2	8	28	26	26
Crystal Palace	18	7	5	6	21	20	26
Fulham	18	8	2	8	25	26	26
Tottenham	18	7	4	7	27	23	25
Everton	18	7	4	7	18	20	25
Brighton	18	6	6	6	26	25	24
Newcastle	18	6	5	7	23	23	23
Bournemouth	18	5	7	6	27	33	22
Leeds	18	5	5	8	25	32	20
Nottm Forest	18	5	3	10	18	28	18
West Ham	18	3	4	11	19	36	13
Burnley	18	3	3	12	19	34	12
Wolves	18	0	2	16	10	39	2

William Hill Premiership

Dundee v Kilmarnock.....
Hibernian v Aberdeen.....
Livingston v Dundee Utd .....
Motherwell v Celtic (8pm).....
(Live on Premier Sports)
Rangers v St Mirren .....

Enterprise National League

Aldershot v Wealdstone.....
Altrincham v York .....
Boreham Wood v Solihull Moors .....
Boston Utd v Brackley.....
Carlisle v Morecambe .....
Forest Green v Truro City .....
Rochdale v Hartlepool.....
Scunthorpe v Gateshead.....
Southend v Sutton Utd .....
Tamworth v FC Halifax.....
Woking v Braintree Tn.....
Yeovil v Eastleigh .....

Africa Cup Of Nations

Group C

Tanzania v Tunisia (4pm).....
Uganda v Nigeria (4pm).....

Group D

Benin v Senegal (7pm).....
Botswana v Congo DR (7pm).....

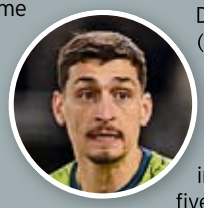
ENZO IS CHASING HOME COMFORTS

Chelsea v Bournemouth
Tonight, 7.30pm

BY **BOBBY VINCENT**

ENZO MARESCA says Chelsea are capable of finishing in the top four but he is trying to understand why his side are struggling to manage matches at home.

The Blues' 2-1 defeat to Aston Villa at Stamford Bridge was the fourth time they have dropped points from a winning position in their first nine home matches of this Premier League season.



Djordje Petrovic (left) returns to Chelsea tonight having conceded more goals than any other keeper in Europe's top five leagues since the start of November.

And Maresca is trying to find out the root of the problem.

"Again, I don't know," said the Chelsea boss when asked if a lack of experience is the reason, with the Blues boasting one of the youngest squads in the league.

"It's just a matter to understand the reason why, because I don't think it's random, when something continues to happen.

"So we need to understand why, no matter if we are winning, drawing or losing, we concede a goal, we lose a little bit of control."

Chelsea cannot afford to lose any more ground on the top four with Bournemouth the visitors this evening.

"In this moment, it is the target," Maresca said on qualifying for the Champions League again.

"So we need to be confident and we need to think that hopefully we can go close again to the ones that are ahead of us."

But Cherries boss Andoni Iraola said: "I don't think Petrovic is the one to blame. He is a keeper that we trust. We have no doubt about his capabilities."

CHELSEA (4-2-3-1): Sanchez; Fofana, Tosin, Chalobah, Gusto; Caicedo, Fernandez; Estevao, Palmer, Neto; Joao Pedro
B'MOUTH (4-2-3-1): Petrovic; Smith, Diakite, Senesi, Truffert; Cook, Tavernier; Brooks, Kluivert, Semenyo; Evanilson
REFEREE: Sam Barrott

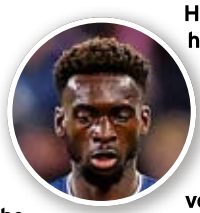
IROEGBUNAM'S SHIRT TO LOSE

Nott'm Forest v Everton
Tonight, 7.30pm

BY **CHRIS BEESLEY**

DAVID MOYES has challenged Tim Iroegbunam to hold on to his shirt at Everton after praising his progress while he fills in for Idrissa Gueye.

The midfielder will start three consecutive Premier League matches for only the second time – he was given a run of four under Sean Dyche, who will be in the opposite dugout for tonight's game at Nottingham Forest.



But with Gueye on Africa Cup of Nations duty with Senegal, Iroegbunam (inset) 22, has been taking his chance to stake a claim for a permanent spot.

Moyes said: "He's got an opportunity to take the jersey and hang on to it if he plays well enough to do so.

"I want him to keep playing forward and be a bit more positive in his overall play, but there are parts of his game that are very good."

Dyche says Forest have been forced to fight their corner after a series of "harsh" calls going against them.

He said: "We are hoping for better going forward. We had a couple of harsh calls on Saturday and a very soft penalty at Fulham. But eventually, you have to make sure you stand up for yourselves."

N FOREST (4-2-3-1): Victor; Savona, Milenkovic, Murillo, Williams; Anderson, Dominguez; Hutchinson, Gibbs-White, Hudson-Odoi; Jesus
EVERTON (4-2-3-1): Pickford; O'Brien, Keane, Tarkowski, Mykolenko; Garner, Iroegbunam; Dibling, McNeil, Grealish; Barry
REFEREE: Michael Oliver

BUBBLES BURST

Hammers' crisis has been on the cards for a while

WEST HAM v BRIGHTON
Premier League: KO 7.30pm

BY **JOHN CROSS**

THE most damning thing of all is that it has almost gone under the radar.

Unless, of course, you are a West Ham fan.

The Hammers are sleepwalking towards relegation and, quite frankly, it's been coming.

It's another crisis story. But because it seems to happen most years, it's almost gone beyond being newsworthy.

That is a very sad reflection on the current state of affairs – and may be the reason why this time it may be irretrievable.

That is why the wider football fan base is not overly surprised to see West Ham five points adrift from safety in the Premier League table.

They are a club gripped by crisis on and off the pitch. Something has gone seriously wrong because the club has spent big money on signings, has an incredible fan base and yet has completely lost its way.

Perhaps the only surprise is that Nuno Espirito Santo has not made more of an impact since taking charge.

West Ham's latest defeat, a 1-0 reverse to Fulham on Saturday, means they are without a win in seven and they have got Brighton, Wolves and Nuno's most recent club Forest up next.

No game is easy when you are struggling but they look particularly difficult – and Wolves has got disaster written all over it.

Last week, the West Ham Fan Advisory Board issued a passionate statement as they pointed the finger of blame firmly at the club's hierarchy.

The statement said: "We have written directly to Baroness Karren Brady strongly expressing our concerns and frustration, and very much hope the club will answer questions, take positive actions, and most importantly recruit a new leadership team capable of propelling our club towards that realistic 'best of the rest' status more in tune with the club's revenue, and huge loyal fan base.

"To be overtaken by two newly promoted clubs, plus a number of other organically far smaller outfits is a direct reflection of the leadership.

"Replacing a visit from Manchester United with their namesakes from Oxford is not the vision we were sold, it's not good enough, not acceptable and we request immediate positive answers and actions."

West Ham have blindly drifted along thinking there will be three worse teams than them.

At the moment, judging by the table, there are only two.

The management of the club comes down to Brady and David Sullivan.

The first-team manager can only work with the tools he is given. And the recruitment has been truly shocking. When it comes to ambition, it feels like it was lost a long time ago.

HAMMERING HOME Fans make their frustrations known during a protest last month

WEST HAM (4-3-2-1): Areola; Walker-Peters, Todibo, Kilman, Scarles; Magassa, Potts, M. Fernandes; Paqueta, Summerville; Bowen
BRIGHTON (3-4-3): Verbruggen; Coppola, Van Hecke, Dunk; Kadioglu, Ayari, Hinshelwood, De Cuyper; Minteh, Welbeck, Gomez
REFEREE: Michael Salisbury

Welbeck's future remains in limbo

FABIAN HURZELER is remaining tight-lipped over the future of "important" striker Danny Welbeck.

The 35-year-old former Manchester United and Arsenal frontman is out of contract at the end of the season, but the Brighton boss is giving little away on what might lie ahead for a key player.

Ahead of tonight's trip to West Ham, Hurzeler said: "We never speak about a player's personal situation in public.

"We all know how important Danny Welbeck is. He knows it, the club knows it, so let's see what happens." Welbeck (inset) is in line to start at the London Stadium after recovering from a lower back injury.

The English forward could be joined in the squad by Kaoru Mitoma, who is available following the illness which kept him out of the 2-1 defeat at Arsenal on Saturday.

Hurzeler added: "We know exactly how difficult it is to beat West Ham from the game at the Amex a few weeks ago."

GIANNI MUSES OFFSIDE TWEAK

BY **NEIL MCLEMAN**

FIFA president Gianni Infantino has suggested changing the offside law so that an attacker has to be "completely in front" of the last defender to be penalised.

Players can currently be ruled offside if any part of their body – except the hand or arm – is beyond the final opponent. VAR replays have ruled out goals when only an attacker's toe is over the offside line.

And speaking at the World Sports Summit in Dubai, Infantino (above) said the laws could be tweaked to make football more "attacking" and "attractive".

He said: "Years ago, we introduced VAR to make football fairer, to give the referee the opportunity to correct an error that millions of people at home or at the stadium could have seen.

"We continue to examine the laws, asking ourselves how we can make the game more attacking, more attractive.

"Let's consider the offside law, which has evolved over the years, requiring the attacker to position himself behind the defender, in line with him: perhaps in the future he will have to be completely in front to be offside."

Infantino also defended the cost of 2026 World Cup tickets, insisting the level of demand outstrips supply.

"We have six to seven million tickets on sale and in 15 days we received 150 million ticket requests," he said."It shows how powerful the World Cup is.

"In the almost 100 years of the World Cup, FIFA has sold 44 million tickets in total.

"So, in two weeks we could have filled 300 years of World Cups. Imagine that. This is absolutely crazy."

BACK 4 GOOD

Boss Amorim ready for full system reboot

FOCUSED ON GLORY
Amorim switching things and (left) Kobbie Mainoo hungry to figure

MAN UNITED v WOLVES
Premier League: Kick-off 8.15pm

BY **TYRONE MARSHALL**

MANCHESTER UNITED'S back four could be here to stay after Ruben Amorim insisted he would not revert to a back three every week when players return from injury and international duty.

Amorim switched shape for the first time as head coach in the Boxing Day win against Newcastle and could stick with it against Wolves.

After showing signs of flexibility for the first time in his 14 months in charge at Old Trafford, Amorim suggested a back four would be for life and not just Christmas, even when key men return over the next few weeks.

He shifted shape with Noussair Mazraoui, Amad and Bryan Mbeumo away on international duty, while injuries have mounted with Harry Maguire, Matthijs de Ligt, Kobbie Mainoo and Bruno Fernandes all on the treatment table.

But Amorim insisted he had always planned to evolve during his time in charge and only resisted doing so until now to avoid giving the impression he had caved to media pressure.

He has played the 3-4-2-1 shape, which he had success with in Portugal, almost constantly at United, and felt it was important to use that system to bed in the principles he wants to instil at the club.

"First of all, it's a process," Amorim said. "When I came here last season, I understood that maybe I don't have the players to play well in that system, but it was the beginning of the process.

"We are trying to build an identity. Today is a different moment. We don't have a lot of players and we need to adapt, but they already know and understand why we are changing.

"It is not because of the pressure of you guys [in the media], or of the fans, it's because now we understand the way we want to play and the principles are the same.

"We can change the system, and I think we are going to become a better team because, when all the players return, we are not going to play all the time with three defenders."

Amorim is sweating on the fitness of Mason Mount after he limped out of the Boxing Day win against Newcastle.

MANCHESTER UNITED (4-2-3-1): Lammens; Dalot, Heaven, Yoro, Shaw; Casemiro, Ugarte; Dorgu, Cunha, Zirkzee; Sesko.
WOLVES (3-4-2-1): Sa; Mosquera, S Bueno, Krejci; Doherty, J Gomes, Fer Lopez, H Bueno; Hwang, Mane; Arokodare.
REF: Thomas Bramall.

Sant and winners now

WOLVES head coach Rob Edwards will emphasise the positives of an encouraging second-half performance which tested Liverpool when he tries to lift his players for a trip to Old Trafford.

Santiago Bueno's 51st-minute goal sparked a much-improved performance and Edwards wants them to carry that to Manchester United.

"It's been a long period of time. I've been here six weeks and I'm fed up of it," said Edwards. "We have to latch on to that second half performance because I don't want to be coming into the dressing room at the end of games and saying, 'That's the level but we are taking nothing from it'."

FERNANDES SO KEEN

FROM BACK PAGE

but Amorim revealed Fernandes' influence stretches beyond the pitch and praised the way he had continued to back his team-mates while injured.

"He's always speaking, that's why he's the captain," Amorim said.

"The practice, every time he makes a recovery, he is the guy who is going to watch the other guys' training that day. So there is a lot of things that you guys don't see but that he does. He's a great leader all the time."

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COACH TRIP Howe is desperate for away win

HOWE HUNTING TO MAKE TOON TRAVEL SWEET

Burnley v Newcastle
Tonight, 7.30pm

BY **LEE RYDER**

EDDIE HOWE has ordered his players to "stand up and be counted" as Newcastle look to cure their travel sickness at Burnley.

The Toon have won just once away from St James' Park in the Premier League this season, denting hopes of European qualification.

But head coach Howe has welcomed the tough trip to Turf Moor tonight.

"Every away game is a positive for us, because we need to turn our away form around," he said. "Our general performances on the road have been improving, and we need to keep that momentum going.

"It is such a difficult league, wherever you play, you know you will be severely tested. But we need to stand up and be counted and turn those better performances into positive results."

Howe has dismissed a theory that his team cannot perform away from the comfort zone of St James' Park, where 50,000 Geordies are helping to pick up results this term. With a team packed with Germany, Brazil, England and Italy stars, Howe does not buy into the argument.

He said: "We have players who have played on all types of big stages and all sorts of venues, we have international players, but for whatever reason, we have not done as well on the road.

"Now early season we were really struggling to create chances and score goals.

"And we haven't kept a clean sheet for a while in the Premier League, so when you do that you put yourself under pressure.

"So we have stuff to look at both ends of the pitch. We are better than we have been previously so we are moving in the right direction. It's just not as quickly or as consistently as we want."

Burnley (probable): Dubravka; Laurent, Ekdal, Humphreys; Walker, Ugochukwu, Florentino, Pires; Edwards, Broja, Bruun Larsen.

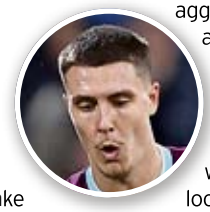
Newcastle (probable): Pope; Miley, Thiaw, Schar, Hall, Joelinton; Guimaraes, Tonali, Gordon, Murphy, Woltemade.

Referee: Rob Jones.

Scott on Max power

SCOTT PARKER is hoping to have Maxime Esteve back for tonight's visit of Newcastle.

The Burnley defender (below) has missed two games with a knock he suffered in training. He was expected to be fit for Saturday's stalemate with Everton but did not make the matchday squad.



"Maxime's closer," said Clarets boss Parker. "Hopefully he'll be in the frame to play."

It is only a little over three weeks since Burnley lost 2-1 at Newcastle, after having Lucas Pires sent off late in the first half.

"It'll be a tough game for sure, they're a really good side and an aggressive side," added Parker.

"We're coming off two positive performances where we've looked really solid, and looked a real threat.

"We could take some huge positives from last time we played Newcastle, certainly before the sending off."

UP FOR THE FIGHT Emery enjoys the last-gasp win against Gunners this month

HEART & GOAL

ARSENAL v ASTON VILLA
Premier League: KO 8.15pm

Villa are just the job as Arsenal's familiar Emery eyes another blow

BY **NEIL MCLEMAN**

UNAI EMERY has insisted he feels no emotion on his Emirates Stadium return tonight as he bids to shatter another Arsenal title dream.

The Spaniard never came close to winning the Premier League during his unhappy 18 months in north London – and still insists his Aston Villa are not challengers now.

But the Spaniard effectively ended his former club's title challenge with a win at the Emirates in April 2024 with a typical tactical masterclass crowned by two late goals.

And after ending the Gunners' 18-match unbeaten run at Villa Park this month, Emery's team can deal another huge blow to their opponents' latest Premier League tilt tonight.

Asked if he felt emotional returning to Arsenal, the Villa head coach said: "No, because after 20 years I have coached in different clubs in Spain, England, even Russia and Paris.

"When I am coming back to play the teams I coached before, for me, it is one match more. It is not about anything else.

"I want to win because my responsibility and all energy is to do my best work for our fans.

"My heart is with San Sebastian, Real Union and Sociedad. The other clubs I have coached, my heart is part of them. Now, my heart is Aston Villa. Everything I am doing is trying to get the best for our fans, the owners, the players and coaches."

A 12th consecutive Villa victory – and back-to-back away wins against Chelsea and Arsenal – would draw his latest club level on points with the Gunners at the season's halfway point.

And the former Sevilla, Paris Saint-Germain and Villarreal manager – who became a bit of a joke at Arsenal before he was replaced by Arteta (left) in 2019 – would be a serious title contender, whether he admits it or not. The four-time Europa League winner has the form team in Europe.

His fellow Basque, Arteta, who never hides his emotions on the touchline, claimed he wants Arsenal to make Villa "suffer" at the Emirates after watching a video nasty of the "cruel" December 6 defeat in the West Midlands.

"I have a few ideas and things that we have to do better, and it was quite cruel as well the way we lost it, but yeah, we learnt from it," he said.

"It can be good if you use that motivation and that hunger in the right manner."

Arsenal have won six consecutive Premier League home games but have not beaten a top-five team yet.

And they have benefitted from four own goals in the past three unconvincing matches at the Emirates.

"Well, that's what we want, that every opponent that comes here suffers," Arteta said.

Emery, who won the Ligue 1 title with PSG in 2018, said of Villa's chances: "Speaking about the title for me does not make sense for us. Now, in December."

But Emery, now 54, added: "Everyone has to dream. I have my dream and I am here getting my dream. My huge dream here or as a coach is to win the Champions League. That is my dream, all my life.

"In each moment, I am realistic. The only dream I have now is tomorrow's match. There are a lot of ways of where we want to get. But now, there is only tomorrow. After tomorrow, we will see."

Arsenal (probable): Raya; Rice, Gabriel Magalhaes, Saliba, Lewis-Skelly; Odegaard, Zubimendi, Merino; Saka, Gyokeres, Martinelli.

Aston Villa (probable): Martinez; Bogarde, Konsa, Lindelof, Maatsen; Onana, Tielemans; McGinn, Buendia, Rogers; Watkins.

Referee: Darren England.

RAYA Made big save against the Seagulls

NERVOUS GUNNERS FEAR

COMMENT
By John Cross

THE nerves are jangling and you can feel the tension already.

Arsenal fans should be enjoying this season as they are top of the Premier League, top of the Champions League table, and are into the Carabao Cup semi-finals.

Yet they are suffering a serious case of the jitters.

The Gunners are leading a three-horse title race, but are the ones biting their fingernails, almost beset with doubt and anxiety. And it is so naive to suggest otherwise.

Aston Villa come to the Emirates tonight riding the crest of a wave on the back of 11 straight wins.

While Manchester City look assured because they have been there, seen it, done it and won it so many times before. Arsenal fans are making the players nervous. The players are making the fans nervous.

Even Mikel Arteta is struggling to quell the growing sense of anxiety.

How can Arsenal go from being 2-0 up against Brighton to being nervous wrecks, with David Raya needing to produce the save of the season to get a nervy 2-1 win? Or blowing leads against Wolves and Crystal Palace before eventually winning through with a stoppage-time own goal and penalty shoot-out respectively?

Maybe it is a positive they find ways to win. But not many regulars in the Emirates see it like that.

They are supposed to be blowing teams away (their xG is consistently higher than their goal return) – but Arsenal seem weighed down by the pressure of

FINISHED Watkins seals a late 2024 win which sank Arsenal's title bid

THE UNAI EDGE

Since Unai Emery took over from Steven Gerrard at Aston Villa in October 2022, he has faced his former club Arsenal 6 times: W3 D1 L2

2022-23
Feb 18 - Aston Villa 2 Arsenal 4

2023-24
Dec 9 - Aston Villa 1 Arsenal 0
April 14 - Arsenal 0 Aston Villa 2

2024-25
Aug 24 - Aston Villa 0 Arsenal 2
Jan 18 - Arsenal 2 Aston Villa 2

2025-26
Dec 6 - Aston Villa 2 Arsenal 1

PREMIER LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	18	13	3	2	33	11	42
Man City	18	13	1	4	43	17	40
Aston Villa	18	12	3	3	29	19	39
Liverpool	18	10	2	6	30	26	32
Chelsea	18	8	5	5	30	19	29
Man Utd	18	8	5	5	32	28	29
Sunderland	18	7	7	4	20	18	28
Brentford	18	8	2	8	28	26	26
Crystal Palace	18	7	5	6	21	20	26
Fulham	18	8	2	8	25	26	26
Tottenham	18	7	4	7	27	23	25
Everton	18	7	4	7	18	20	25
Brighton	18	6	6	6	26	25	24
Newcastle	18	6	5	7	23	23	23
Bournemouth	18	5	7	6	27	33	22
Leeds	18	5	5	8	25	32	20
Nottm Forest	18	5	3	10	18	28	18
West Ham	18	3	4	11	19	36	13
Burnley	18	3	3	12	19	34	12
Wolves	18	0	2	16	10	39	2

VIDAGANY Unhappy at Villa's festive fixture list

Schedule 'mystery' riles Vid

ASTON VILLA chief Damian Vidagany has hit out at the Premier League over fixture scheduling.

Villa will face Arsenal tonight for the second time in a matter of weeks but are yet to play Nottingham Forest this season, something boss Unai Emery admitted he was confused by.

Worse still, Villa must twice play away from home between Christmas and New Year (vs Chelsea and Arsenal). Taking to social media, director of football operations Vidagany wrote: "Totally understand our manager. Why EPL brings a match day from 2nd half of season before matchday 19 has not a clear explanation – it is a mystery.

"This makes more convenient the fixtures for certain clubs that are not travelling on this very busy Christmas period.

"To make us play two away games in less than 72 hours will never be an excuse, but we agree that is much better on the recovery side [to] play twice at home and not travel."

Blackouts lighten up

BY **JOHN CROSS**

ARMCHAIR viewers are getting a potential taste of the future for live matches.

The 3pm TV blackout has been lifted for successive Saturdays to allow Scottish games to be broadcast over the festive period. Celtic's 4-2 win over Livingston was on Sky on Saturday and the broadcaster is doing the same this weekend for the Dundee derby.

It is not the first time it has happened this season because the Scottish FA applied to UEFA to allow Motherwell's 1-0 League Cup win against Aberdeen to be broadcast live in September.

The 3pm Saturday TV blackout dates back to the 1960s but there is a growing belief it may end when the current £6.7 billion Premier League TV deal finishes in 2029.

TITLE FLOP...

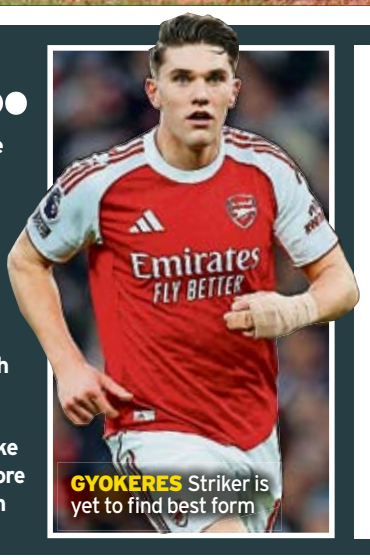
expectation. If injuries do not undermine their season, nerves will.

This is supposed to be Arsenal's year – they are expected to win the title. The theory is they must do it this year and will never get a better chance.

That expectation is weighing heavily on Viktor Gyokeres. The £64 million striker brought in to deliver the title looks as if he is being held back by the shackles of fear. The Gunners have a deep squad and great quality but will only be the best squad if they win it.

And they have to prove they can live up to that expectation.

Getting over the finish line will open the floodgates to sustained success. Failure will make next season feel even more painful. And that is from where the fear stems.



GYOKERES Striker is yet to find best form

Arteta: We must prepare to spend

FROM BACK PAGE

including close to £250 million last summer as they seek a first Premier League crown since 2004.

And before hosting title rivals Aston Villa tonight, Arteta (right) said: "We are aware of the situation and the timescale of certain players.

"When you look across the other clubs as well, they have 24, 25 squad players, and so there's nothing especially in our squad.

"Although we have more injuries than expected, some of them not avoidable I would say, but we want to be better and we know how important the part of having the right availability with players is going to play in this season.

"Depending on the availability of certain players, the window is there.

"And we have to be actively looking. Then can we do it or not, that's a different story, but our job is to be always very prepared because something can happen."

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TIGER AT 50

Legend Woods still shaping game for future generations

GOLF'S GAME-CHANGER: PAGE 52

HONOURS

Lionesses gong strong as sports stars make mark on New Year list

SEE NEWS: PAGES 6-7

WATCHING BRIEF Fernandes is impatient

BRUNO IN A HURRY TO RETURN

BY **TYRONE MARSHALL**

BRUNO FERNANDES is already asking to return to Manchester United training - but Ruben Amorim will not risk the midfielder tonight.

It has been just a week since Fernandes picked up a hamstring injury, which is expected to sideline him for a few weeks.

But head coach Amorim revealed the Portugal midfielder is asking to get back involved in training sessions at Carrington.

"Bruno was already saying that he needs to train, but we don't know," said Amorim. "No chance he is going to play against Wolves, no chance."

Fernandes was at Old Trafford on Boxing Day to watch United beat Newcastle, ending a run of six Premier League fixtures without a win when the 31-year-old does not play.

In his absence, Lisandro Martinez was named captain,

TURN TO PAGE 57, COLUMN 3

ART EYES JANUARY SALES

Injury crisis forces Gunners to weigh up reinforcements

ARSENAL V ASTON VILLA 8.15PM

By **Neil McLeman**

MIKEL ARTETA has revealed Arsenal are "actively looking" for January signings to ease his defensive injury crisis.

Declan Rice was deployed as an emergency right-back against Brighton last Saturday after Jurrien Timber and Riccardo Calafiori joined Ben White on the sidelines.

Arteta said: "We're Arsenal and we have to be looking at it, 'OK, 'What do we need?'"

The Spanish manager has spent more than £1 billion since taking over at the Emirates,

TURN TO PAGE 59, COLUMN 4

CASE FOR DEFENCE Arteta is attempting to keep Gunners in the title race despite missing defenders (from left) Jurrien Timber, Riccardo Calafiori and Ben White

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Puzzles

SUDOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, row, and 3x3 square includes all of the digits from one to nine. **Solutions tomorrow**

EASY

	2		8		9		7	
		6	1		3	8		
		9	7		5	2		1
5				1				3
	1				8		9	
2				7				5
		5	4		1	7		
4		7	5		2	9		
	8		6	9	7		5	

MEDIUM

		5	4	6	2	3		
		9				1		4
4				1				2
			5		1			
	8		2	7	4		5	
		1	8		6			
1							4	3
		7				2		
	4	2	7	8	5	6		

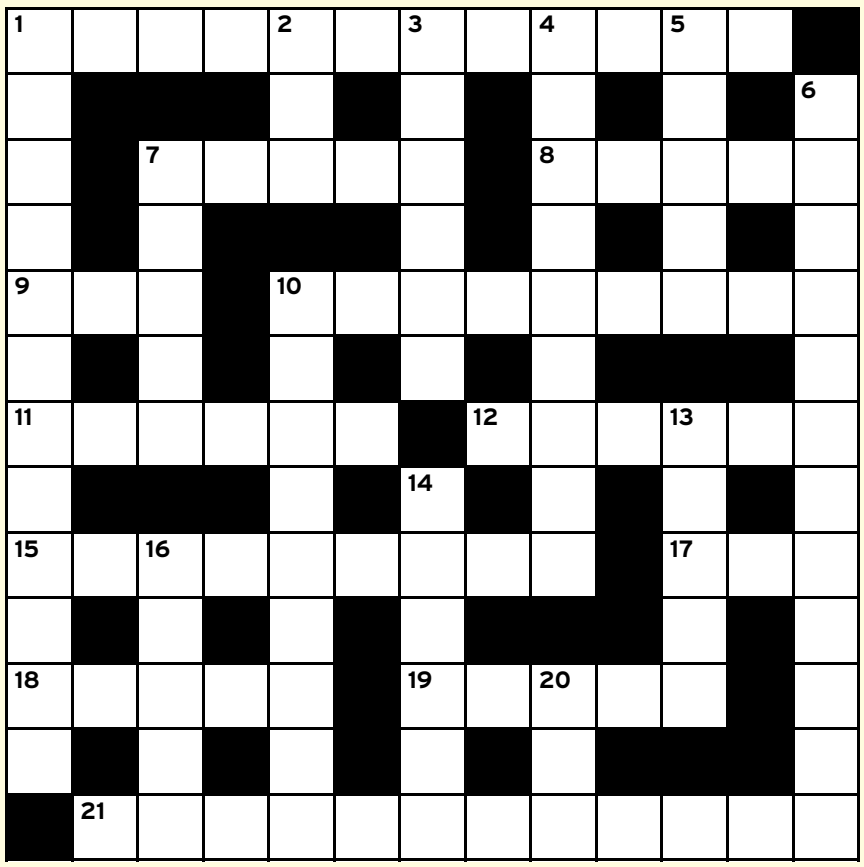
DIFFICULT

			1		4			
		5	9		8	7		
	1						6	
2		4				3		6
6		1				4		5
	8						2	
		6	7		1	9		
			4		5			

Extra clues: **0901 322 5609**
**Calls cost 75p plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

Today's solution: **0907 181 2573**
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

QUICK CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1 Despicable (12)
7 Deserve (5)
8 Mere (5)
9 Possess (3)
10 Force (9)
11 Summary (6)
12 Man (6)
15 Troublesome (9)
17 Tune (3)
18 Oust (5)
19 Fang (5)
21 Self-direction (12)

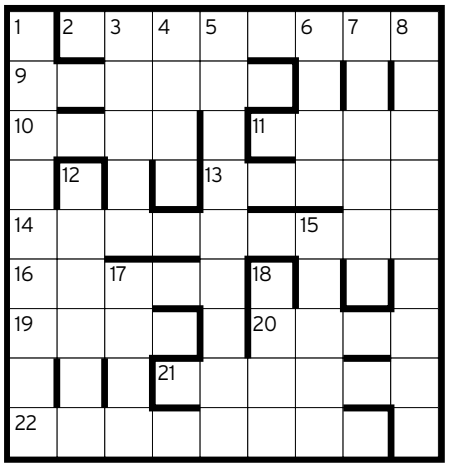
DOWN
1 Map-maker (12)
2 Deviate (3)
3 Powerful (6)
4 Hasty (9)
5 S American wool-producer (5)
6 Incontrovertible (12)
7 Less (5)
10 Selected group (9)
13 Tether (5)
14 Sting (6)
16 Branch (5)
20 Strange (3)

Solution tomorrow

Stuck on the puzzle? Call **0905 789 4188** to hear individual clues or the full solution

Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. Service provider Spoke Ltd - **Helpline 0333 202 3390*

SMALL CROSSWORD



ACROSS
2 Forgave (8)
9 Concurs (6)
10 Decorated a cake (4)
11 Mountain route (4)
13 Loft (5)
14 Attractive (9)
16 Automaton (5)
19 Iridescent gem (4)
20 Second-hand (4)
21 Reach a destination (6)
22 Sequence of words (8)

DOWN
1 Precipitation (9)
3 Regions (5)
4 Perform again (4)
5 Leave-taking (9)
6 Orderly (4)
7 Without difficulty (6)
8 Ceded ends (anag.) (9)
12 Human beings (6)
15 Elementary (5)
17 Farm building (4)
18 Heat injury (4)

Solution tomorrow

For today's solution call: **0907 181 2582**
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

CROSS DOUBT

Target times: Average: **20 mins** Good: **16 mins** Excellent: **12 mins**

Stuck? Call for a clue **0901 322 5601**
Halve your Target Time!

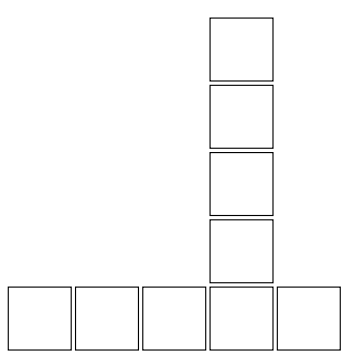
Today's solution **0901 322 5607**
Both today's words in a moment!

**Calls cost 75p plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

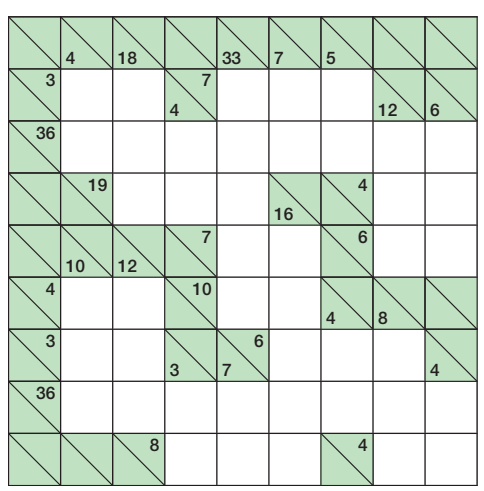
Can you make two common five-letter words from the nine letters given, using each letter only once? You can – but only if one letter features in both words in the squares on the right. There's at least one way to do it, and you have to have the right letter at the crossover – but which one is it?

See if you can find the answer within our target time. If you need help, ring our clue-line below to find out the crossover letter. Solution tomorrow

F K L O O R S T W



KAKURO



Fill each sequence of blank squares using the numbers 1-9. Each sequence – across and down – must total the number in the shaded box at the beginning or top of each line. A number may be repeated in each line but NOT in a sequence.

Solution tomorrow

Puzzles

QUIZWORD

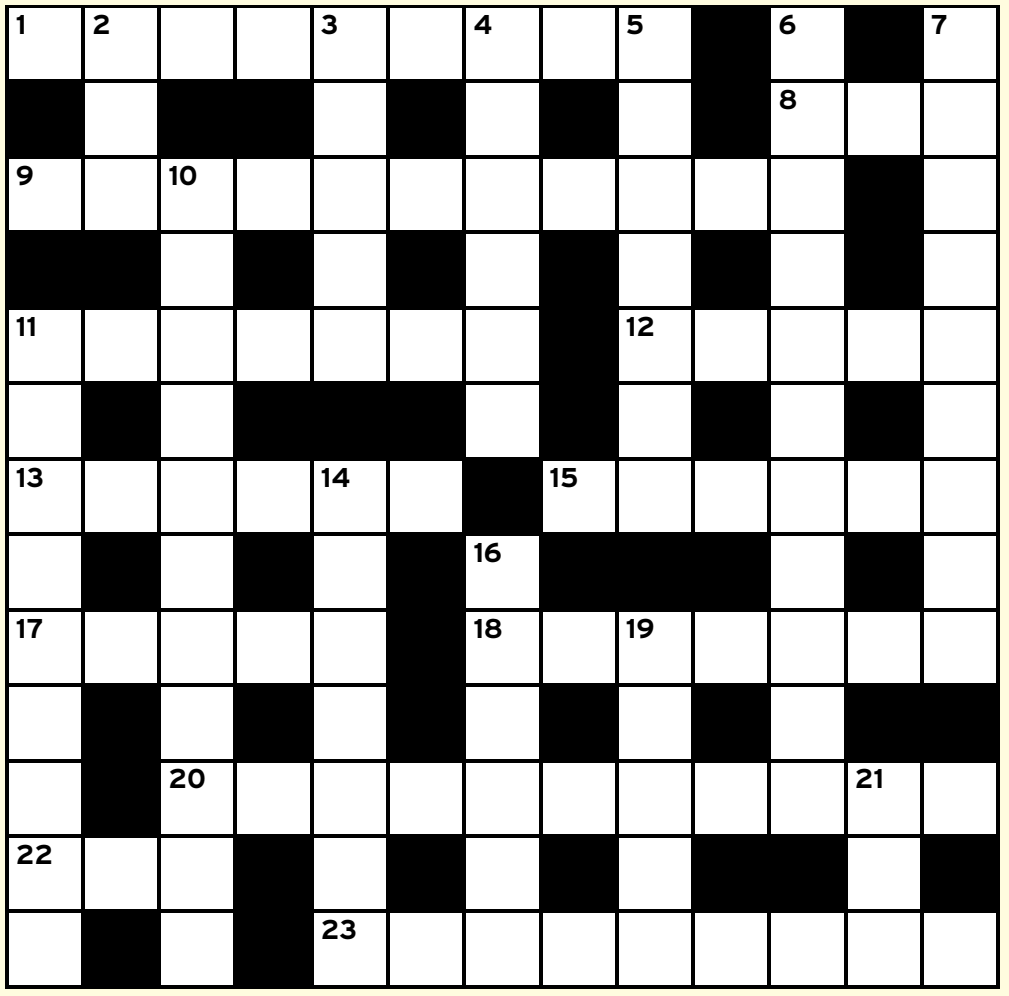
ACROSS

1 John, painter whose works include 1819's View On The Stour (9)
8 Unit of area equal to 100 square metres (3)
9 Employee of Scrooge in Charles Dickens's story A Christmas Carol (3,8)
11 Singer-actress who played the title role in the 1996 film Evita (7)
12 Anton, British ballet dancer born Sydney Healey-Kay in 1904 (5)
13 James, Scottish author of the short story collection Not Not While the Giro (6)
15 John, director of the films Pink Flamingos and Serial Mom (6)
17 Tanzanian island north of Zanzibar which is a major producer of cloves (5)
18 Sofia, director of the 2017 historical thriller film The Beguiled (7)
20 Film biography of Cole Porter starring Cary Grant as the composer (5,3,3)
22 Transition from one shot to another in film (3)
23 William M, author of the novel The History Of Henry Esmond, Esquire (9)

DOWN

2 River in Ethiopia that flows south into Lake Turkana, Kenya (3)
3 City on the River Po that is the headquarters of the Italian motor industry (5)
4 Comic book character whose alter ego is Bruce Wayne (6)
5 Mammal also called a spiny anteater (7)
6 Best Actress in a Leading Role Oscar nominee for Love With The Proper Stranger (7,4)
7 Division of Oceania that includes Fiji and Vanuatu (9)
10 Angelo, film composer whose scores include that for Secretary and Mulholland Drive (11)
11 Vice-president of the United States from 2017 to 2021 (4,5)
14 1985 novel by John Fowles (1,6)
16 The --- Sea is that part of the South Atlantic Ocean named after a vessel of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition of 1902 to 1904 (6)
19 City in Belarus at the confluence of the Pina and Pripyat Rivers (5)
21 Stored-heat cooker invented by Nobel Prize winner Gustaf Dalen (3)

Solution tomorrow



Stuck on the puzzle? Call
0905 789 4190
to hear individual clues or the full solution
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*
Service provider Spoke Ltd -
Helpline 0333 202 3390

SAMURAI SUDOKU

In Samurai Sudoku, normal sudoku rules apply, but the 9x9 sudoku at the centre shares four of its 3x3 boxes with those of the outer sudokus.

Solution tomorrow

	4						9	
6			1					
			4		2		6	8
	9	2						
				4		2		5
		4				9		6
				7	3			
1		3					8	
		6		1	9			

		8				7	6	
4		9		3	6			
		6		8			9	
5	9							6
			3	1	2			
	8		5			1		7
			1		7			
						9		1
			2					5

						4	3	7
			4		8		2	
			3		6			

	1		8			7		1
			1		6	8		
3	5	7				4		9
				8	5	7		6
	6	8		7				
	3			1		4		
4					8		2	
8		6						
			3		2		8	4

			2		3		4	
4			9		3	6		
			6		8		9	
5	9							6
			3	1	2			
	8		5			1		7
			1		7			
						9		1
			2					5

						7	6	
			3		6			
			8				9	
								6
			3	1	2			
			5			1		7
			1		7			
						9		1
			2					5

WORD BUILDER

Answer each clue so that every word contains the same letters as the previous word, plus or minus one.

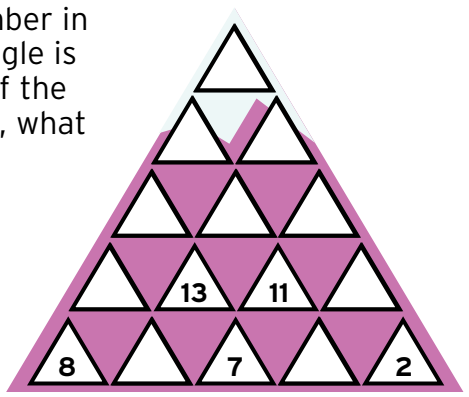
Solution tomorrow

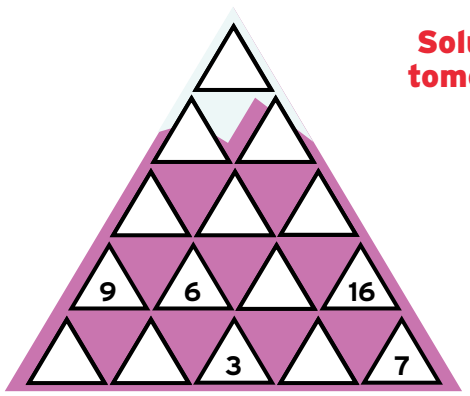
1 □□□
2 □□□□
3 □□□□□
4 □□□□□□
5 □□□□□
6 □□□□
7 □□□

1 Evergreen
2 Shoot
3 Gun
4 Sieve
5 Coquette
6 Skip
7 In good form

SUMMIT UP

If the number in each triangle is the sum of the two below, what is the top number?





Solution tomorrow

SMALL CROSSWORD

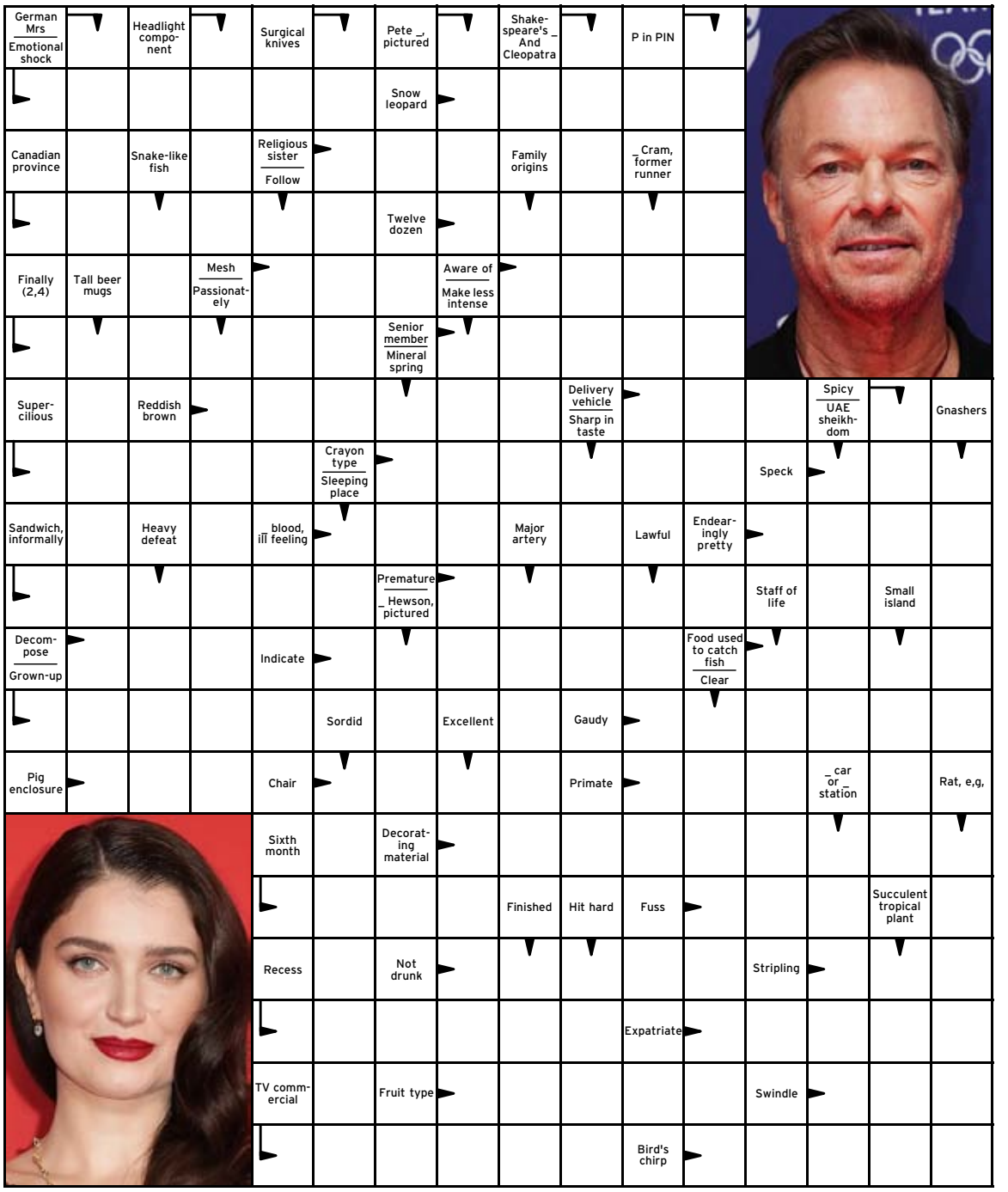
Across:
1 Gradually,
7 Legend,
9 Abel,
10 Divan,
12 Bits,
13 Copyright,
14 Onus,
16 Maori,
18 Etui,
19 Unpack,
20 Horseshoe.

Down:
1 Glaucoma,
2 Aged,
3 Delays,
4 Underline,
5 Lav,
6 Loathe,
8 On strike,
11 Monaco,
12 Biceps,
15 Utah,
17 Oar.

ARROW-WORD

Arrow-words are like crosswords, but the clues are printed inside squares on the grid. Write your answers in the blank squares in the direction indicated by the arrows.

Solution tomorrow



WORDSEARCH

I	X	U	J	N	V	B	X	N	F	B	L	Z	F	U
D	J	O	Y	B	K	O	P	J	B	R	G	P	L	F
S	L	R	T	O	S	P	O	C	K	U	O	U	L	K
E	T	O	X	M	C	A	T	A	D	P	S	W	P	O
V	J	K	B	T	F	C	G	O	W	R	O	N	S	X
E	V	O	K	E	H	C	M	H	A	K	I	R	K	Z
N	L	P	U	O	K	L	A	F	O	R	G	E	P	Q
O	I	K	S	C	O	T	T	Y	Z	K	L	G	I	U
F	O	Y	C	U	X	N	U	T	E	Q	U	B	C	A
N	R	M	A	R	K	I	Y	V	H	R	O	F	A	R
I	J	T	V	W	U	G	W	F	O	O	V	W	R	K
N	V	F	X	W	E	S	D	R	Z	K	K	L	D	K
E	J	R	B	N	Q	N	H	E	W	Q	U	S	X	S
U	H	U	R	A	P	Y	A	E	F	H	A	L	I	M
T	Y	C	A	A	H	S	G	J	R	G	P	I	V	S

STAR TREK CHARACTERS

Find all the terms listed below in the grid.

Solution tomorrow

CHEKOV ● CRUSHER ● DATA ● GOWRON
JANEWAY ● KIRK ● LAFORGE ● MCCOY
PICARD ● QUARK ● SCOTTY
SEVEN OF NINE ● SISKO ● SPOCK
SULU ● TUVOK ● UHURA ● WORF

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS

QUICK CROSSWORD

Across: 4 Gradual, **8** Arisen, **9** Advance, **10** Astray, **11** Letter, **12** Entangle, **18** Untimely, **20** Sermon, **21** Object, **22** Eatable, **23** Belief, **24** Statute.
Down: 1 Panacea, **2** Dictate, **3** Remain, **5** Redolent, **6** Dearth, **7** Archer, **13** Gauntlet, **14** Demerit, **15** Mystify, **16** Depart, **17** Impart, **19** Imbued.

WORDSEARCH

E	Y	N	O	I	S	A	V	N	I	E	H	T	K	O
F	M	A	I	S	S	S	R	U	O	H	E	H	T	Q
E	Q	X	W	W	R	U	S	K	U	O	H	Y	J	U
Y	C	A	S	A	D	E	I	D	J	J	J	E	Y	E
I	N	I	O	N	D	E	H	N	L	J	G	J	O	N
U	O	L	L	Y	O	N	A	T	E	U	Y	Y	B	I
T	T	A	Z	A	N	I	A	D	O	G	U	M	R	N
R	G	R	B	B	M	Z	L	R	C	E	B	Q	E	N
E	N	T	X	A	F	O	N	S	A	A	H	W	P	U
S	I	S	V	X	K	I	T	N	T	F	L	T	A	V
P	D	U	T	G	L	O	O	L	I	Q	O	M	P	U
A	D	A	G	U	K	D	E	H	C	T	I	W	E	B
S	A	G	O	E	T	E	E	F	Y	P	P	A	H	C
S	P	M	R	V	Z	W	H	P	Q	V	Q	E	T	H
S	T	R	A	N	G	E	R	L	A	N	D	Z	C	U

ARROW-WORD

	S		L		I		E		K		C			
S	H	E	A	R	S		F	R	E	S	H			
	I		S		L	E	T	I	N		A			
A	N	T	H	E	A			B	O	O	T			
		E			N	E	E		B	U	T			
G	R	A	N	A	D	A		P	I	T	Y			
	U		I			T	O	O		S		W		E
R	E	A	L	M		U		O	V	E	R	H	E	A	D
		G		A	P	P	A	R	I	T	I	O	N		E
L	E	A	D	E	R		R		A		O		D	A	N
	P	R	O		E	S	C	A	L	A	T	E		I	
	E		S	O	D	A		C		G		N	O	D	S
B	E	T	H		I	D	E	N	T	I	C	A	L		O
				C		M	E	A	L			M	E	L	T
			S	T	E	P		F	E	T	E		E		
			I			E	L	F		A	L	T	A	R	
		R	O	A	R		E	E	C		U	G	O		
		N		O	C	T		K	A	B	U	L			
	T	S	A	R		A	N	Y		E	E	L			

SUDOKU EASY

8	7	4	2	5	3	6	9	1
3	1	5	7	6	9	8	4	2
2	9	6	1	8	4	3	5	7
4	6	8	5	1	7	9	2	3
9	2	1	4	3	8	5	7	6
5	3	7	6	9	2	1	8	4
1	8	2	3	7	5	4	6	9
6	4	9	8	2	1	7	3	5
7	5	3	9	4	6	2	1	8

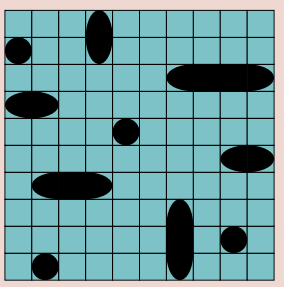
SUDOKU MEDIUM

1	9	3	6	8	2	5	7	4
4	6	2	5	7	1	8	9	3
7	5	8	9	4	3	6	1	2
2	3	6	8	1	7	4	5	9
8	1	7	4	9	5	3	2	6
5	4	9	3	2	6	7	8	1
9	2	4	7	6	8	1	3	5
6	8	5	1	3	9	2	4	7
3	7	1	2	5	4	9	6	8

SUDOKU DIFFICULT

5	6	9	8	4	2	1	7	3
8	7	3	1	6	5	2	4	9
4	1	2	9	7	3	5	8	6
9	2	6	4	1	8	7	3	5
7	8	5	3	2	6	9	1	4
3	4	1	7	5	9	8	6	2
1	9	7	5	3	4	6	2	8
2	3	8	6	9	1	4	5	7
6	5	4	2	8	7	3	9	1

BATTLESHIPS



KAKURO

		1	9			1	2	
	2	3	4	1		2	5	1
	1	2		2	1		6	2
		6	1		2	1	3	
		5	2	1		2	1	
	1	4		2	1		8	2
	2	7	9		3	2	4	1
		8	1			1	7	

WORD BUILDER

Sat, East, Steak, Basket, Beaks, Bask, Ask

TARGET

MANICALLY
anima, animal, caiman, calm, calmly, cayman, claim, clam, cyma, lama, lamina, layman, lima, limy, llama, mail, main, mainly, malic, mall, mania, maniac, manic, MANICALLY, manila, manilla, manly, many, mica, mill, mina, myna

THE ALPHAPUZZLE

Across: Ration, Stanza, Varnish, Audit, Told, Forge, Manic, Lean, Truck, Lacquer (clue), Finial, Prance.
Down: Gravity, Stuff, Startle, Bunny, Toxic, Jackdaw, Chronicle, Strange, Scarf, Snide, Genuine, Party, Snorkel.

THE ALPHABEATER

Black squares: 1, 2, 6, 8, 10, 15, 16, 17, 18, 25, 31, 33, 39, 40.
Across: Straight, Away, Litter, Ebony, Zodiac, Reveal, Eke, Cranks, Quaffs, Cribs, Endear, Chip, Exemplar. **Down:** Cowers, Downpour, Due, Stye, Ignite, Rejoices, Cram, Idly, Requital, Trivia, Scar, Tut, Affinity, Marvel.

CROSS DOUBT

Across: HEAVY
Down: PLANK

Puzzles

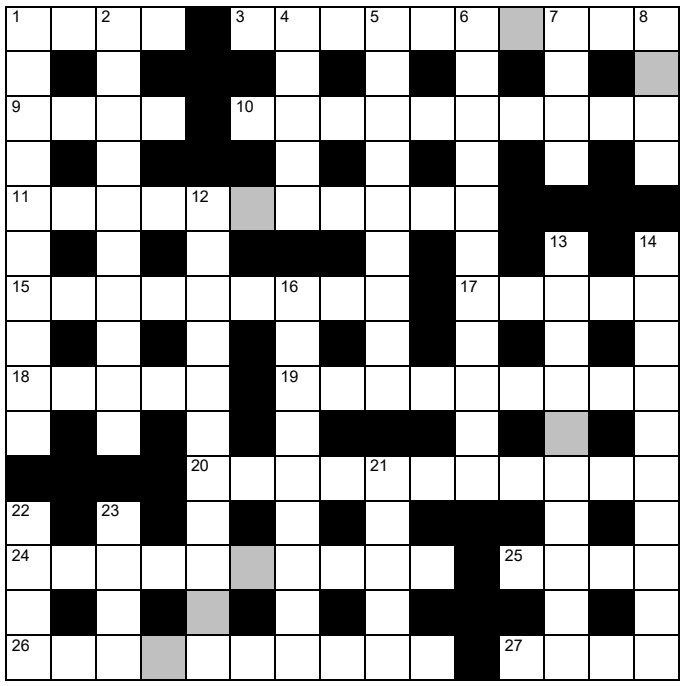
CRUSADER PRIZE CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Vermin I am returning to church (4)
3 Wild West figure good on a French warplane (10)
9 Relative to a short-lived art movement (4)
10 Attractive bloke has a cardiac condition? (5-5)
11 Make vegan kid eat strange compromise (4-3-4)
15 Religious writing in true, crisp translation (9)
17 Exercise is able to supply food (5)
18 Entertain a source of inspiration (5)
19 Woman at the wheel in November (9)
20 Basically, where Brazil is to be found? (2,1,8)
24 Send home mad pirate with speed outside (10)
25 Halt second summit (4)
26 Prospector finding first prize rigged, sadly (4-6)
27 Insult indistinctly (4)

DOWN

1 Mark pursues crazy range on island (10)
2 Bony scoundrel broke our vase (10)
4 Turn over, informed on conclusion (5)
5 Company meant to transform the heavens (9)
6 Drain and squeeze seedy reporters (6,5)
7 Most artisans holding a pastry item (4)
8 Republican buy-out for jewel (4)
12 Respected having increased in value (11)
13 Maybe flat is unexpected (10)
14 Trespasser is not unchanged nor reptile (10)
16 Endless acne – using treatment (9)
21 Defence group with connection to loosen (5)
22 Main road is a nuisance (4)
23 Stop a leak containing a stone (4)



WIN £100 CASH

FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN
Read down the letters in the highlighted squares to reveal the mystery word.

TO ENTER: Call **0904 161 3700** (calls cost £1.50 plus your telephone company's network access charge) and leave your answer and details, or text **DXCRUS** followed by a space, your answer, name and address details to **88833** (texts cost £1.50 plus your standard network rate). Lines close at midnight Saturday. Or send your grid containing the answer in the shaded squares by posting it to: Crusader Crossword, December 30, PO Box 8694, Derby DE1 9TW. Entries must be postmarked by December 31 at the latest. For any postal enquiries, call helpline number. SP: Spoke – 0333 202 3390.
An extra day is given for postal entries during bank holidays.
● ***One weekly winner will be the first random correct entry drawn from all entry routes after the closing date of midnight Saturday. Competition runs Sunday to Saturday. The Editor's decision is final.***

NEED HELP? Call **0904 161 1609** for 5 extra clues! Calls cost £1.50 plus your telephone company's network access charge.

NAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

LAST FRIDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1 Cloudscape, 6 Carp, 10 Absence, 11 Glimpse, 12 Gear stick, 13 Tales, 14 Dig up, 15 Mangetout, 17 Withstand, 20 Spend, 21 Sober, 23 Ventilate, 25 Address, 26 Minding, 27 Even, 28 Truculence. **DOWN:** 1 Clang, 2 Onslaught, 3 Danish pastries, 4 Caesium, 5 Pigskin, 7 Appal, 8 Press stud, 9 Distress signal, 14 Downstage, 16 Operation, 18 Adviser, 19 Dynamic, 22 Badge, 24 Eagle. **Prizeword:** Creation

TARGET

K	N	O
I	L	W
M	E	A

● *The Target uses words in the main body of Chambers 21st Century Dictionary (1999 edition)*

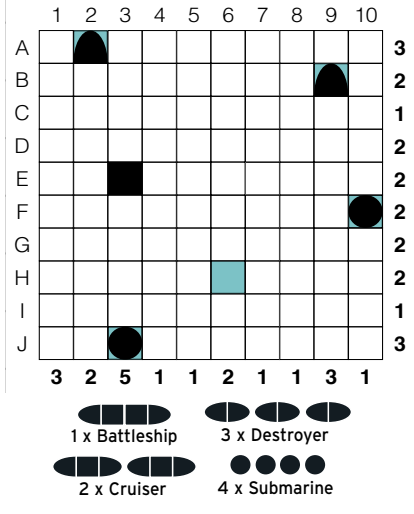
HOW many words of four letters or more can you make from the letters shown here?
In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each must contain the centre letter and there must be at least one nine-letter word. No plurals. Verb forms ending in S permitted.

TODAY'S TARGET
Good 31; **very good** 46; **excellent** 61 **(or more).** Solution tomorrow

Call **0907 181 2585**
for today's Target solution
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

BATTLESHIPS

FIND where the fleet of ships shown is hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some squares have been filled in to start you off.
Solution tomorrow



THE ALPHABEATER

TARGET TIME: 32 minutes

CAN you crack the Alphabeater? Each grid number represents a letter – or black square. As in Alphapuzzle, every letter of the alphabet is used. But you have to complete the grid too! Use the given letters and black squares below the grid to start. The grid is 'rotationally symmetrical' – in other words, it looks the same if you turn the page upside down.
Solution tomorrow

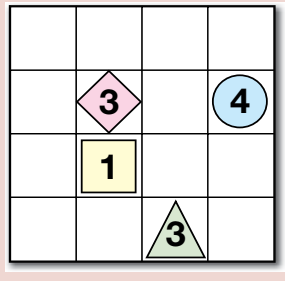
Extra letter clues
0907 181 2560
(Deduct three minutes for each extra clue letter heard)
Full solution
0907 181 2558
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

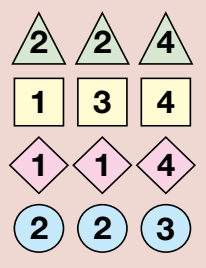
A	36	40	32	38	36	17	16	31	38	36	10	32	30
B													
C	33	14	28	3	10	35	38	5	25	38	19	40	35
D													
E	23	10	21	13	38	21	4	38	20	30	28	40	18
F													
G	18	21	19	7	39	5	36	3	33	4	38	36	27
H													
I	4	38	1	1	31	7	31	25	34	10	3	22	36
J													
K	38	7	40	33	10	11	38	15	40	2	38	30	10
L													
M	2	13	29	25	20	22	9	17	23	28	6	5	6
N													
O	2	10	20	10	30	30	36	10	16	35	40	13	40
P													
Q	40	9	34	6	28	18	12	3	12	36	26	38	2
R													
S	24	38	29	20	35	5	26	9	2	19	34	36	7
T													
U	17	8	22	10	26	31	21	14	38	5	37	31	15
V													
W	3	12	18	2	19	33	10	22	32	13	25	11	9
X													
Y	24	38	36	30	37	10	16	7	29	40	39	10	20
Z													

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
			H									■							
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
G		B												■					

● Alternatively, for six Extra Letter clues to your mobile, text **DXBEAT** to **64343.** Texts cost £1 plus standard network rate.

KEIJO





Place the tiles into the grid so that four different numbers and four different shapes appear in each row and column.
Solution tomorrow

THE ALPHAPUZZLE®

Alphapuzzle® tests logic and word power. Each grid number stands for a letter. Every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter or letters – below the main grid – to start. Solution tomorrow

DIFFICULTY: 8/10; **TARGET:** 25 mins; **CLUE:** Belief I linger around nothing.

A	2	16	3	18	12	18	19	5	■	■	14	■	■
B													
C	■	6	■	■	26	■	■	16	2	2	18	5	12
D													
E	22	26	18	9	16	3	■	8	■	■	13	■	19
F													
G	■	16	■	■	2	■	14	2	8	10	8	11	3
H													
I	10	2	23	5	15	■	2	■	■	■	2	■	10
J													
K	16	■	■	■	18	14	16	25	■	■	2	■	24
L													
M	22	■	6	18	5	■	4	■	24	19	16	■	18
N													
O	19	■	8	■	■	17	18	6	16	■	■	■	9
P													
Q	2	■	22	■	■	■	6	■	8	11	8	9	26
R													
S	19	23	6	9	6	8	20	■	6	■	■	18	■
T													
U	23	■	24	■	■	14	■	1	23	17	7	16	2
V													
W	9	21	23	18	2	16	■	■	2	■	■	12	■
X													
Y	■	■	3	■	■	6	8	15	16	19	4	16	2
Z													

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 K	16	17 M	18	19	20	21	22	23	24 F	25	26

EXTRA LETTER CLUES: 0907 181 2568*
Hear up to six Extra Letters, deduct two minutes for each clue letter heard.
FULL SOLUTION: **0907 181 2565***
ACROSS ONLY: **0907 181 2561*** / DOWN ONLY: **0907 181 2562***
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

Alternatively, for six extra letter clues direct to your mobile, text **DXALPHA** *to* **64343.** *Texts cost £1 plus standard network rate.*

Alphapuzzle® ©2025 Acorn Editorial Ltd. All words appear in Chambers Dictionary.

THE DAILY EXPRESS 30-SECOND CHALLENGE

TODAY'S ANSWERS: BEGINNER = 6; INTERMEDIATE = 73; ADVANCED = 29.

PLAY MORE CROSSWORDS AND GAMES AT EXPRESS.CO.UK/PUZZLES